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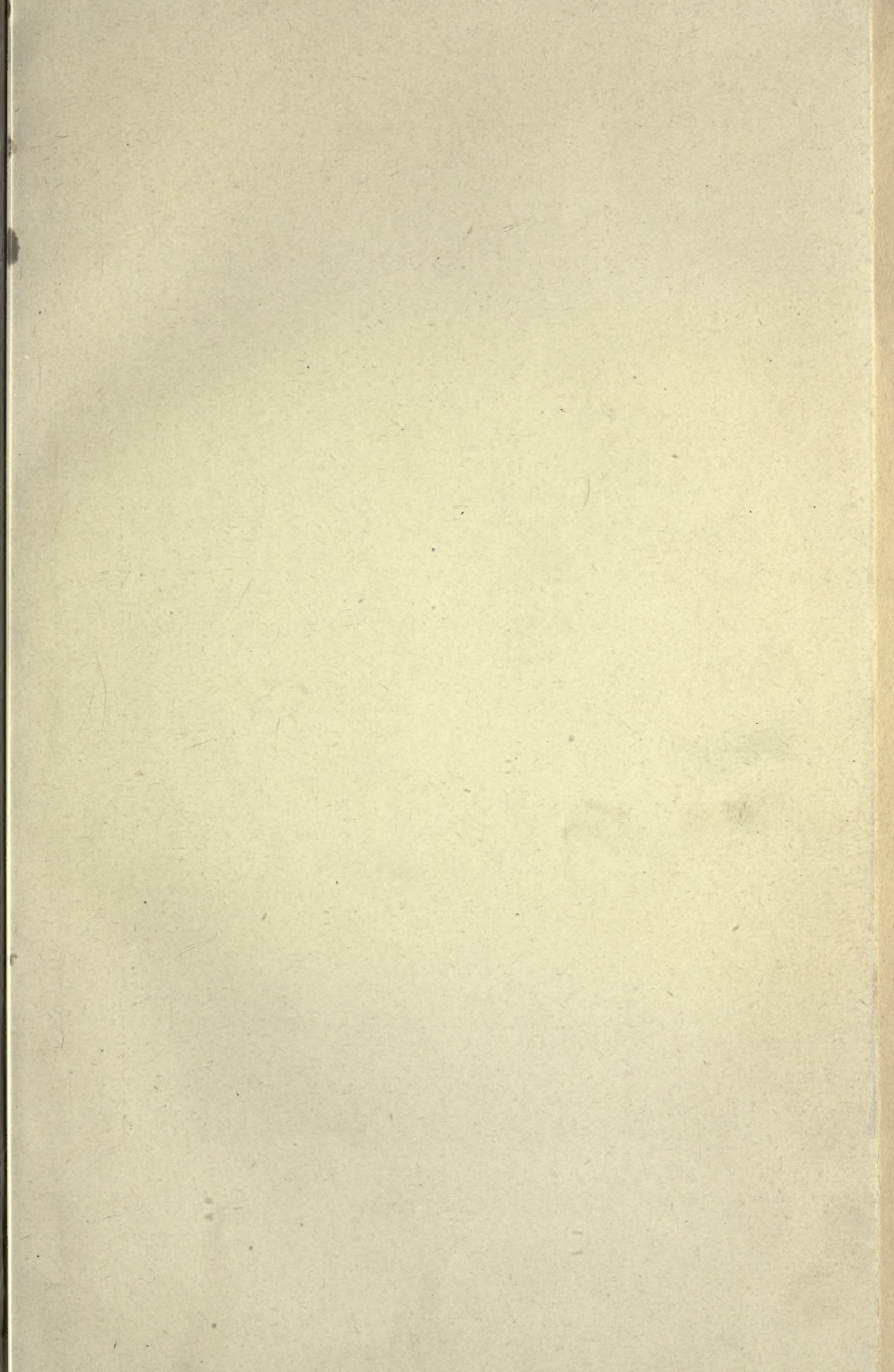
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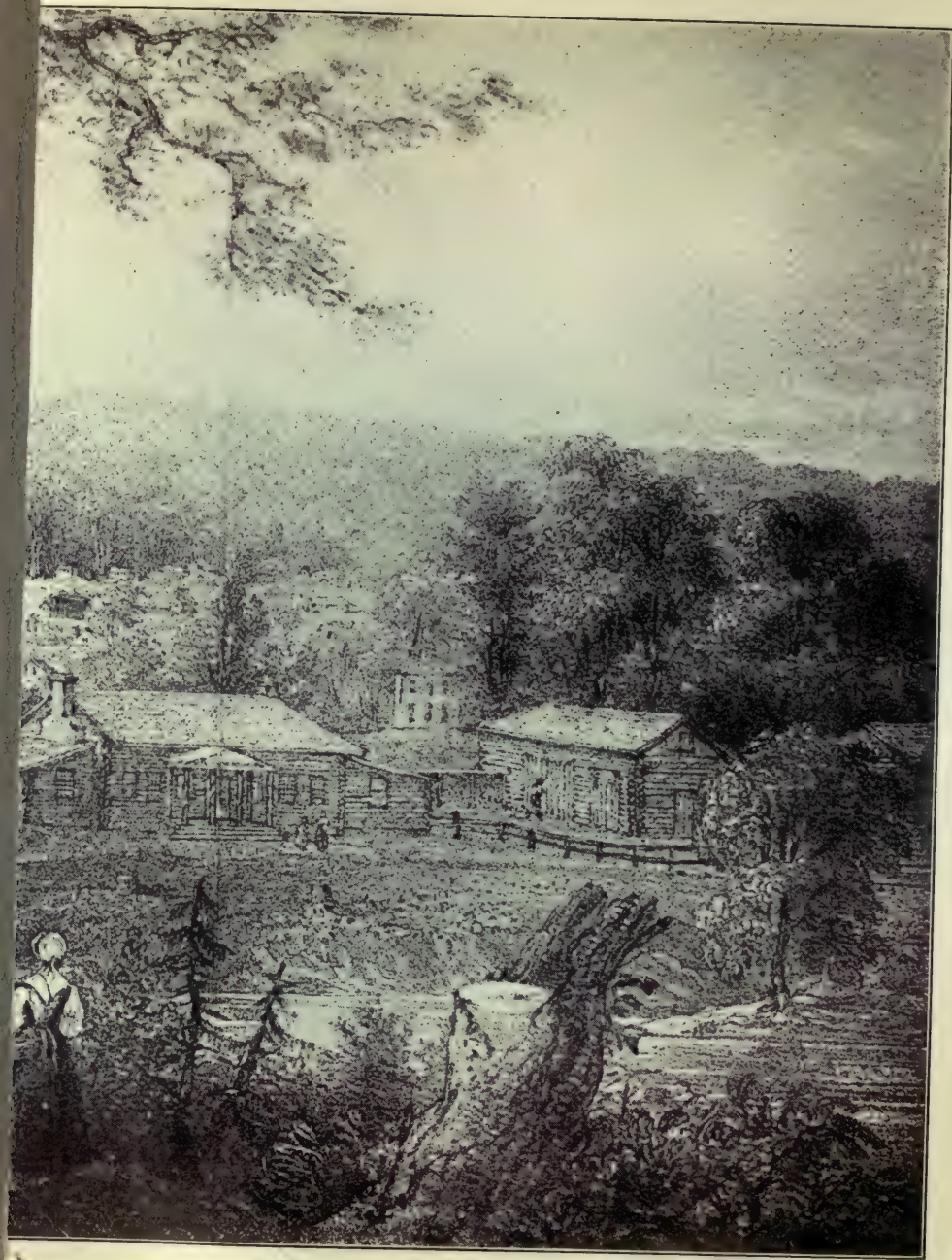
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VIF
(From *Fraser*)



OF GUELPH
(*Magazine*, November 1830)

JOHN GALT

BY

R. K. GORDON, M.A. (TORONTO), B.A. (OXON.)

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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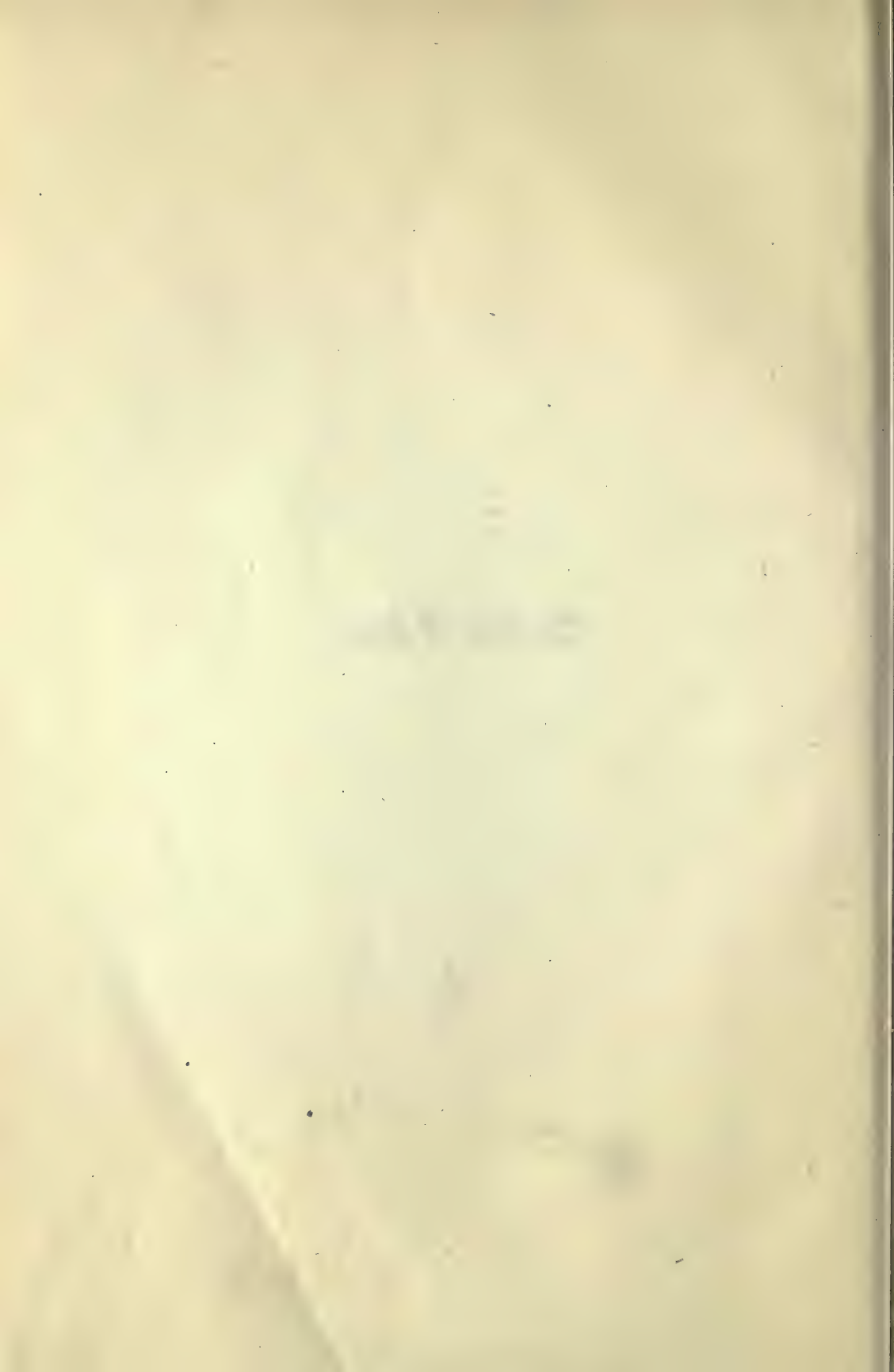
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To my Father



PREFACE

In writing this little book I have received help from many sources. Through the kindness of Professor W. J. Alexander I was enabled to spend a year in Toronto and avail myself of the libraries there. I am indebted to Dr. Alexander Fraser for allowing me to examine a box of Galt's papers in the Ontario Archives; to Mrs. Helmer, of Toronto, for help of various kinds in matter relating to her grandfather's family; to Mr. Justice Galt, of Winnipeg, for the loan of letters; to George Galt, Esq., of Winnipeg, for the loan of books; to Professor A. H. Young, of Trinity College, for many valuable hints; to William Smith, Esq., for helpful guidance among the Archives at Ottawa; to Professor O. D. Skelton, of Queen's University, for lending me the MS. of part of his book on Sir Alexander Galt; and to R. M. Hogg, Esq., of Irvine, and Herbert Henderson, Esq., of Greenock, for their trouble in clearing up many points.

R. K. G.

CHAPTER II

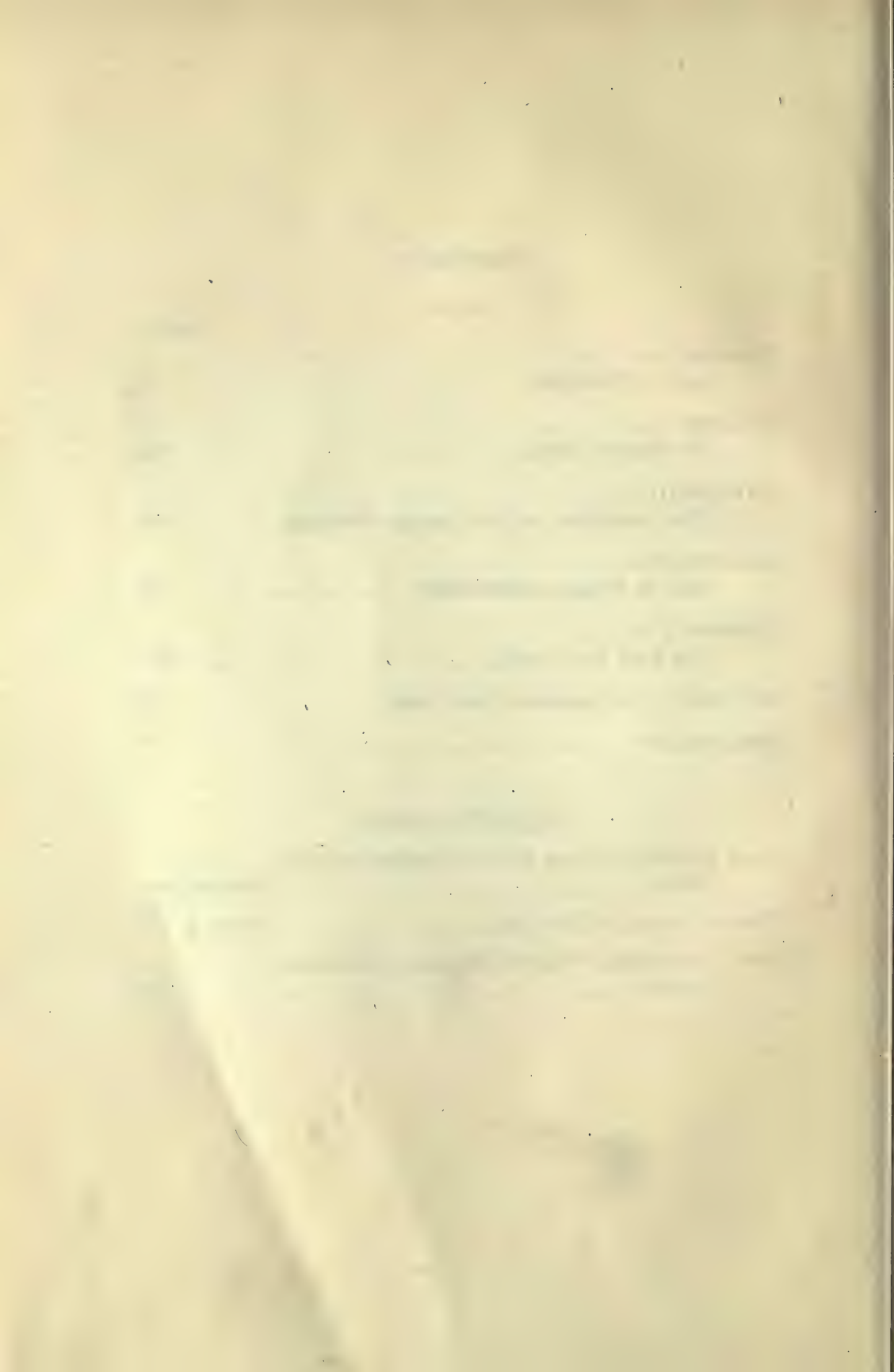
THE first of the great principles of the human mind is the principle of identity. This principle states that every thing is what it is, and that it cannot be otherwise. It is the foundation of all knowledge, and without it we could not know anything. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a man is a man, and that a horse is a horse. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a triangle has three sides, and that a circle is round. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a flower is a flower, and that a tree is a tree. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a book is a book, and that a house is a house. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a dog is a dog, and that a cat is a cat. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a bird is a bird, and that a fish is a fish. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a star is a star, and that a planet is a planet. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a mountain is a mountain, and that a river is a river. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a city is a city, and that a country is a country. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a king is a king, and that a queen is a queen. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a father is a father, and that a mother is a mother. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a brother is a brother, and that a sister is a sister. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a friend is a friend, and that an enemy is an enemy. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a good man is a good man, and that a bad man is a bad man. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a just man is a just man, and that an unjust man is an unjust man. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a wise man is a wise man, and that a foolish man is a foolish man. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a brave man is a brave man, and that a coward is a coward. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a noble man is a noble man, and that a base man is a base man. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a virtuous man is a virtuous man, and that a vicious man is a vicious man. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a holy man is a holy man, and that a sinful man is a sinful man. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a saint is a saint, and that a sinner is a sinner. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a angel is an angel, and that a devil is a devil. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a god is a god, and that a demon is a demon. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a spirit is a spirit, and that a ghost is a ghost. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a soul is a soul, and that a body is a body. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a mind is a mind, and that a heart is a heart. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a brain is a brain, and that a nerve is a nerve. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a muscle is a muscle, and that a bone is a bone. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a cell is a cell, and that a tissue is a tissue. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that an organ is an organ, and that a system is a system. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a part is a part, and that a whole is a whole. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a piece is a piece, and that a part is a part. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a fragment is a fragment, and that a remnant is a remnant. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a scrap is a scrap, and that a shred is a shred. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a bit is a bit, and that a piece is a piece. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a drop is a drop, and that a splash is a splash. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a speck is a speck, and that a spot is a spot. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a stain is a stain, and that a mark is a mark. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a sign is a sign, and that a symbol is a symbol. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a word is a word, and that a phrase is a phrase. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a sentence is a sentence, and that a paragraph is a paragraph. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a chapter is a chapter, and that a book is a book. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a page is a page, and that a line is a line. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a letter is a letter, and that a word is a word. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a syllable is a syllable, and that a vowel is a vowel. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a consonant is a consonant, and that a letter is a letter. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a sound is a sound, and that a noise is a noise. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a voice is a voice, and that a tone is a tone. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a color is a color, and that a shade is a shade. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a hue is a hue, and that a tint is a tint. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a flavor is a flavor, and that a taste is a taste. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a smell is a smell, and that a scent is a scent. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a touch is a touch, and that a feel is a feel. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a sight is a sight, and that a look is a look. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a sound is a sound, and that a noise is a noise. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a voice is a voice, and that a tone is a tone. It is the principle that makes it possible for us to say that a color is a color, and that a shade is a shade. 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CHAPTER I

LIFE (1779-1820)

ERRATA

Pp. 18 and 19, for "Kirkman, Finlay & Co." read "Kirkman Finlay & Co."

P. 30, 4 lines from bottom, for "Mr." read "Mrs."

P. 33, 6 lines from bottom, for "to" read "of."

P. 37, line 3; for "*Lelix Holt*" read "*Felix Holt*."

P. 42, 6 lines from bottom, for "burghs" read "burgh."

P. 45, note 1, delete: "(1849)."

11., 228)—John Galt, cooper (d. 1778), his wife Marion Crawford (d. 1701); their children Robert William, William Hugh, Jean, Grizal and Alexander (d. 1753); James Galt, cooper (d. 1778). It is probable that Alexander Galt (d. 1753) was Galt's grandfather. For the Virginian Galts see an article *The Galt Family of Williamsburg*, contributed by Miss Mary M. Galt to the *William and Mary College Quarterly* (April, 1900.)

⁸"The young men, in general, are sailors, or go abroad to the West Indies and America as store-keepers and planters." *Statist. Acct. of Scot.* (vol. 7, p. 172). The dates of his father's birth and marriage are from the Irvine Session Records.



CHAPTER I

LIFE (1779-1820)

John Galt was born on May 2, 1779, in Irvine, Ayrshire, at that time a town of about 4,000 inhabitants.¹ His parents lived in High Street in an old-fashioned house long since replaced by the Union Bank. A stone's throw away lived David Sillar, Burns' "Dainty Davie", and across the road was Dr. MacKenzie, one of Burns' warmest friends.

The Galts had been settled in the district as early as the seventeenth century. Tradition said they had come from Perthshire. Some of them had suffered in the religious persecutions, and two ancestors had been banished to the Southern States in 1684. Their descendants still live in Virginia.²

Galt's Scottish reserve allows us slight but pleasant glimpses of his parents. His father, John Galt, born in 1750, married in 1776 and had three children, John, Thomas, and Agnes. He was the Captain of a West Indiaman and was no doubt responsible for his son's later interest in West Indian matters.³ Of easy-going nature, moderate ability, and often away from home, he seems to have influenced his son very little. From him Galt inherited his good looks and striking figure. Mrs. Galt was a more strongly marked character, possessed of shrewd common sense, a taste for satire and a

¹A description of Irvine was contributed by Rev. James Richmond, the parish minister, to Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland* (vol. 7, pp. 169, 171).

²*Archaeological and Historical Collections Relating to the Counties of Ayr and Wigtown* (vols. 4, 7 and 8). Some of Galt's ancestors are buried in Dreghorn Churchyard, a couple of miles from Irvine (*Autobiog.* II., 228)—John Galt, cooper (d. 1719); his wife Marion Crawford (d. 1701); their children Robert William, William Hugh, Jean, Grizal and Alexander (d. 1753); James Galt, cooper (d. 1778). It is probable that Alexander Galt (d. 1753) was Galt's grandfather. For the Virginian Galts see an article *The Galt Family of Williamsburg*, contributed by Miss Mary M. Galt to the *William and Mary College Quarterly* (April, 1900.)

³"The young men, in general, are sailors, or go abroad to the West Indies and America as store-keepers and planters." *Statist. Acct. of Scot.* (vol. 7, p. 172). The dates of his father's birth and marriage are from the Irvine Session Records.

mastery of the vernacular which was transmitted to both her sons. Galt learned from her what Carlyle learned from his peasant father. The prudent, observant Mrs. Pringle of *The Ayrshire Legatees* was drawn from her, and doubtless she also served as model to some extent for all those stirring, thorough-handed women with sharp tongues and kindly hearts whom Galt delighted to portray.

Galt was a sickly child; a sort of "all-overishness"—a favourite word of his—weighed upon him. He could not hold his own in games or studies with the other grammar school boys.¹ He seems to have learned little enough either from the excellent dominie or from his private tutor. The best part of his education was got outside the class-room. Lounging on his bed, much to his energetic mother's annoyance, he devoured ballads and story-books—Chevy Chase, Blind Harry², Leper the Tailor. He also heard tales and legends from a number of old women in the close behind his grandmother's house. At his grandmother's hearth he heard stories of the smuggling days at the Troon and much else which he later used in the *Annals of the Parish*. Gardening was another resource for the delicate boy. He liked also to wander among the whin and broom of the commonly northwest of the town and in the woods surrounding Eglinton Castle within a mile of Irvine.

One curious incident of his boyhood is worth telling. In 1782 a Mrs. Elspat Buchan arrived in Irvine. She had heard Mr. White, the Relief Minister of Irvine, preach in Glasgow and declared he was the first who had spoken effectually to her sinful heart. She had now come to be further confirmed in

¹Part of the old grammar school, founded in pre-Reformation days, still stands. Henry Eckford (1775-1832), afterwards famous as a naval architect in America, was one of Galt's schoolfellows. Edgar Allan Poe was there for a short time, probably in 1815 or 1816. John Allan, Poe's foster-father, was a native of Irvine and a nephew of William Galt of Richmond, Virginia. The school may have supplied some details to the sketch in Poe's tale *William Wilson*. (See *Complete Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. J. H. Whitty, 1917.) Some information about Galt's school days was supplied by G. J. Weir and Alexander Rodger to Miss Harriet Pigott who contemplated writing a life of Galt. This material forms a MS. volume now in The Bodleian and entitled *Memoirs of John Galt*.

²Galt wrote two poems on Wallace—one is printed in *The Bachelor's Wife*, the other is among his papers and was apparently not published.

the faith. She made house to house visitations, expounded the Scriptures, and gave out that she was the woman spoken of in Revelation (ch. XII) and that Mr. White was the man-child she had brought forth. This was too much for Mr. White's orthodox congregation, and he was dismissed. In May, 1784, Mrs. Buchan was banished from Irvine as a blasphemer. Forty or fifty of her followers accompanied her singing psalms and shouting that they were on the way to the New Jerusalem, the route to which seems to have lain through Kilmarnock and Mauchline. "I with many other children also accompanied her," says Galt, "but my mother in a state of distraction pursued and drew me back by the lug and the horn." The wild enthusiastic singing rose in his memory when describing the Covenanters in *Ringan Gilhaize*.¹

Galt was taken every year to spend some time at Greenock. It was on one of these jaunts in 1785 or 1786 that he "was first sensible of the influence of the Muses." On leaving Irvine he had been given two young larks, and on the journey he wrote a ballad on their birth, parentage, and intended education. The poem has not been saved, nor, says Galt, "have I any recollection of again intromitting, as the Scottish lawyers say, with the Muses for several years." These journeys made Galt familiar with scenes and places which afterwards appear in his books—Ardrossan, the ruins of Southennan, the battlefield of Largs, the pretty village of Inverkip.²

When Galt was about ten the family moved to Greenock where his father had built a new house at the north-west corner of West Blackhall Street and West Burn Street. The fourteen or fifteen years spent here left their mark on Galt and on his work. He is indeed sometimes spoken of as a

¹*Autobiog.* I., 6-7. The garden of the house where the Buchanites held their meetings bordered on the Galt garden. Burns has an interesting letter (Mossgiel, Aug. 3, 1784), on the Buchanites, with most of whom he was personally acquainted. They finally settled at Closeburn, Dumfriesshire; and after Mrs. Buchan's death (1791) the camp gradually disappeared. Meg Dods refers contemptuously to Mrs. Buchan (*St. Ronan's Well*, ch. 2.)

²See, for example, Miss Pringle's description of the journey (*Ayr. Leg.*, ch. 1.)

Greenock man. Carlyle found in him the air of a sedate Greenock burgher and called him "a broad gawsie Greenock man." Mrs. Thomson spoke of his Greenock accent. The town had always a place in his "indelible local memory," and for the people he always felt a half humorous affection. They had, he said, a conceit of themselves above others of the human race—a weakness with which Galt could readily sympathize. The humours of Clydeside life delighted him and were faithfully portrayed years afterwards in *The Steamboat*.

At Greenock, though he was "a long soople laddie, who, like all bairns that grow fast and tall, had but little smeddum"¹, he began to shake off his soft ailing disposition. He continued his schooling, but won no distinction.² "He could not be called a dolt, for he was observant and thoughtful, and given to asking sagacious questions; but there was a sleepiness about him, especially in the kirk, and he gave, as the master said, but little application to his lessons, so that folk thought he would turn out a sort of gaunt-at-the-door, more mindful of meat than work."

Two of his schools friends had considerable influence upon him and were always mentioned by him with generous praise. William Spence attracted him by the extent of his general information and by his scientific interests. Park, whom he considered the most accomplished person he ever knew, not excepting Byron, was his literary guide. Some of the scientific amusements were rather risky. A brass cannon constructed by Spence was tested in the Galt kitchen, Mrs. Galt being absent. Fortunately nothing more than a crackle resulted.³ Spence's mechanical ingenuity also turned Galt to

¹This and the following quotation are from *Annals of the Parish*, c. XLII. It is quite clear from the context that Galt himself is meant.

²Galt went to two schools in Greenock. One was in the Royal Close and conducted by Colin Lamont who died in 1851 at the age of 97. (See George Williamson's *Old Greenock*, 2nd series, p. 182); the other was conducted by one McGregor. It was at the second he met Park and Spence.

³Galt's *Life of Spence*, prefixed to Spence's mathematical essay on Logarithmic Transcendents, and also printed in the *Monthly Magazine* (May, 1819). There is a monument to Spence in the Mid Parish Church, Greenock.

less dangerous hobbies. He tried to make a hurdy-gurdy, contrived an Edephusicon (whatever that may be) and an Eolian harp. This last instrument, however, so distressed Mrs. Galt that he was forced to give it away. Inspired by the example of Spence, who "made beautiful sonatas which had as much character as the compositions of Frederick the Great," Galt took up flute-playing. He considered himself rather effective in the overture to Artaxerxes, "and there was a beautiful movement of Jomelli in which I thought myself divine." One of his compositions, Loch-na-gar, when set to Byron's words attained street-organ popularity.

Galt threw himself with equal enthusiasm into literature. After reading Pope's Iliad he kneeled by his bed and prayed that he might produce something like it himself. The first result of this ardour was a rebus on a lime-kiln. Park and he exchanged birthday odes, and wrote poems and articles for newspapers and periodicals. Galt even tried his hand at drama.¹ He naturally began with tragedy—*The Royal Victim*. Another attempt, *The Confessor*, was inspired by Mrs. Radcliffe's *Italian*. A farce, *Lingo's Wedding*, was only kept off the Greenock stage by fear of Mrs. Galt's wrath. His reading was as miscellaneous as his writing. A well chosen library in the town gave him larger opportunities than he had enjoyed at Irvine.² Further chances for writing and discussion were supplied by a monthly society started at Spence's suggestion. His own essays, he confessed, were "the most shocking affairs that ever issued from a pen." It was perhaps at a meeting of this society that he met Hogg who passed through Greenock in the early summer of 1804 on his way to the Hebrides. Galt, according to the Shepherd, was a tall thin youth, resplendent in frock coat and new top-boots, and an emphatic amusing speaker.³

¹Weir, his Irvine schoofellow, says: "Mr. Galt at 14 was writing plays and sending his productions to John Kemble and corresponding with him, who always returned the like answers, adding that his productions only required to be well revised when they might be acted."

²There are two portraits of Galt in the library and one of Spence.

³Hogg's reminiscences of Galt and others are contained in his *Poetical Works*, vol. 5.

During the French Revolution when party spirit was running high the library committee decided to purge the shelves of tainted authors such as Holcroft and Godwin. Such action seemed to Galt and his friends "an unheard-of proceeding in a Protestant land." His wrath was "inflamed prodigiously," and he christened the librarian "the Kaliph Omer."¹ At the next annual meeting for nominating the committee the insurgent youth carried the day; the heretical books were replaced on the shelves and increased in number.

This rebellion was, however, no indication of democratic principles. When war was renewed in 1803 Galt helped to raise two companies of sharpshooters or riflemen, "the first of the kind raised in the volunteer force of the kingdom." Their offer of service was at first rejected, but at Galt's suggestion resolutions were sent to London declaring that, their offer not being accepted, they considered themselves as having the authority of government to believe and represent that there was no danger of invasion. This brought matters to a head; the ardent volunteers were accepted.²

His energy also found vent in walking tours in company with Park and others.³ Memories of an expedition to Loch Lomond may be detected in several scenes in *The Spaewife*. The most ambitious and the last of these jaunts was to the border country, soon to be made famous by Scott. At Durham Galt first saw Mrs. Siddons. Her interpretation of Lady Macbeth made a lasting impression.⁴

Probably, however, Galt took more pleasure in lonely rambles by a moorland stream above the town. A half-hearted angler, he spent most of his time in day-dreams which show to what projects his mind already turned. Many of the undertakings which were to transform Glasgow and the Clyde had already been set on foot. Dredging had changed the river

¹The Librarian was John Dunlop, grandfather of "Tiger" Dunlop, who was with Galt in Canada.

²This incident is used in *The Provost*.

³See a poem by Park—*Reflections on a Sunday Morning's Walk* (*Scots Magazine*, Feb., 1804.)

⁴See *Lives of the Players*. In Galt's English prose there are an extraordinary number of quotations more or less literal from Macbeth.

from a pleasant salmon stream to a great commercial highway. No wonder a youth like Galt with his large ambitions should brood on schemes of improvement and development. The trout stream set him pondering on how Greenock might be supplied with water. To the end of his life he cherished a plan for improving the Greenock harbour, and also planned a canal to join Loch Lomond and Loch Long. He was, however, no mere visionary. His scheme for Greenock's water-supply was afterwards carried out, and the idea of the canal has recently been revived. "In contriving schemes such as these my youth was spent, but they were all of too grand a calibre to obtain any attention, and I doubt if there yet be any one among my contemporaries capable of appreciating their importance."¹ The boy was father of the man. As superintendent of the Canada Company Galt showed the same commercial imagination, met with the same neglect, and felt the same indignation.

There was little chance of Galt's ambitions being satisfied in Greenock. The commercial projects of a clerk in the Customs House, where he had been sent on leaving school, were not likely to be taken seriously. Nor could he find among the bustling complacent people of Greenock much sympathy for his belief that "literature was the first of human pursuits." His father was not wealthy. It became clear to Galt that he must win his own way and also that Greenock was too limited an arena for his powers. Galt never underrated his own capacity.

The immediate cause of his departure was typical of his impulsive nature. "The first revolutionary war," he declared, "had contributed to form in Glasgow a number of purse-proud men, who neither had the education nor the feelings of gentlemen." One of these persons wrote an abusive letter to Miller & Co., into whose employ Galt had passed from the Customs House. Galt took it on himself to demand an apology. He chased the culprit from Glasgow to Edinburgh and forced him to admit his guilt. On the man making excuses for his lan-

¹*Autobiog.* I., p. 20-22.

guage, Galt bolted the door and gave him ten minutes to write an apology. When this was done Galt departed in a state of high excitement and self-approval. Why this adventure should have determined him to quit Greenock is not very clear; it probably increased his confidence.

Galt set out for London with his father probably in May or June, 1804. Among his baggage was an epic poem, *The Battle of Largs*. He had also a bundle of letters of introduction, but these brought him nothing except a few dinner invitations.¹ Left to shift for himself on his father's departure, Galt spent six months in sight-seeing, theatre-going and reading. He and Park exchanged poems and advice. Their letters were, according to Galt, "perhaps the finest specimens extant of communications not intended for the public eye." This pronouncement must be taken on faith as regards Galt's share in the correspondence, for only a few scraps have been preserved. They reflect his loneliness and his scorn for ordinary unexciting tasks. "I beseech you," writes Park, "check all dispositions to grow romantic and endeavour to get rich as soon as possible." Galt's answer to this advice was to publish his epic.² In the end he decided to suppress his book, though he was always proud that it had preceded *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. About the same time he formed a partnership with a fellow-Scot, M'Lachlan. What the business was does not appear, but for a while it seems to have prospered.³ The attempt to be author and man of affairs at the same time is characteristic of Galt.

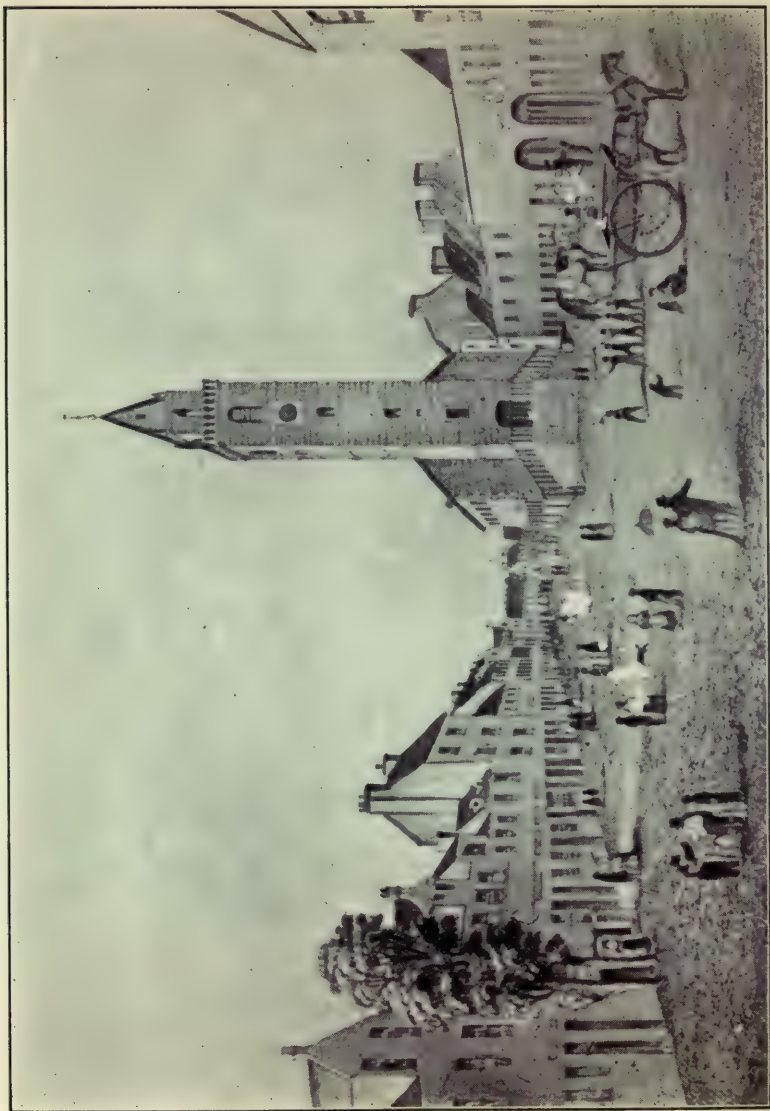
In London as in Greenock Galt scattered his energy. He dabbled in astrology, alchemy, heraldry; he drew up a theory

¹It is a good illustration of Galt's barrenness of invention and of his reliance on his own experience for literary material that the incident of the letters appears in three of his books: *The Stolen Child*, *Bogle Corbet*, and *My Landlady and her Lodgers*.

²*The Battle of Largs: a Gothic Poem. With several miscellaneous pieces.* Galt was needlessly alarmed lest Jeffrey should criticise his book. It was briefly noticed in the *Monthly Review* (Feb., 1805), and in the *Critical Review* (July, 1805).

³Weir says, "He went to London and associating a young man from Port Glasgow with him, he set up a house there for advancing money and doing the business of those merchants who had money to pay or other business to transact in London."





VIEW OF IRVINE IN GALT'S DAY

of crimes and punishments, and discovered how to make indelible ink. He wrote for the periodicals on insurance, history of English commerce, bills of exchange, commercial policy, Upper Canada. It is not surprising that he was soon in business difficulties. In 1808 a correspondent in Scotland to whom they had heavy obligations failed. Galt hurried to Greenock, but, while he was attempting to make an arrangement with the creditors, another firm for which he and M'Lachlan were pledged had collapsed. The result was bankruptcy and a dissolution of the partnership. Many years afterwards he told the story of his failure in *Bogle Corbet*.

In spite of ill-health he tried his luck again, this time with his brother Tom for partner. Tom's departure for Honduras ended this arrangement, and he himself was ordered to Bath by the doctor. On his return he decided to study law, entered himself of Lincoln's Inn, and resolved to go abroad for rest and change. He had little to show for his five years in London. "In this period I was indefatigably industrious, but still greatly regret my misspent time, for the industry was but barren toil."¹

Galt left England in August, 1809² and was absent just over two years. In point of time his travels coincided almost exactly with those of Byron. His acquaintance with Byron was one of the few interesting results of his tour. They sailed on the same Malta packet from Gibraltar, but for several days Byron was aloof and moody. Later he joined his companions in shooting at bottles in the water and in catching turtles. They parted at Malta early in September, Galt crossing to Sicily where he spent three months. A half-hearted tourist, Galt made dull notes about palaces and churches and grudging remarks about the scenery. Statistics of trade and population were of greater interest to his practical mind.

About Christmas he crossed to Malta in an open boat, and three weeks later decided to explore the Archipelago. As yet,

¹*Autobiog.*, I., 94.

²A full account of Galt's two years in the East can be gathered from the *Autobiography*, *Voyages and Travels*, *Letters from the Levant*, *Life of Byron*, and a MS. Journal left among his papers.

however, he seems to have formed no definite commercial scheme. The voyage was not unexciting. They were driven out of their course by a storm, just escaped a French privateer and were fired upon by a Tripoline cruiser. The cruiser's action became clear a few days later, when Galt learned that he was on board a smuggler. He accordingly changed into a small sloop bound for Patras and went on thence to Corinth. At Tripolizza the famous Veli Pasha granted him an interview which may be compared with Byron's reception by Ali Pasha.

Here the idea first occurred to Galt of a business establishment in the East to evade the Berlin and Milan Decrees. The disordered state of Turkey would, he thought, permit English goods to be smuggled through to European markets. This scheme gave a purpose to his travels and extended their scope in the following months.

For a time, however, ill-health kept him a mere tourist. At Athens he fell in again with Byron and Hobhouse. On March 26, 1810, he set about his undertaking in earnest. The first essential was a suitable base of operations in the Archipelago. Hydra and Scio were visited and found wanting, but Myconi seemed the very place he was looking for. Having secured a large building there he left for Malta. There he learned to his astonishment that a plan similar to his own was being considered by Kirkman, Finlay & Co., of Glasgow. To them he sent details of his scheme and resolved in the meantime to extend his explorations.

In the company of a Mr. Monroe he left Malta about the beginning of August. A gale forced them to land on the island of Cerigo where they were entertained by the consul and, to Galt's great annoyance, kissed at parting. They rode north through Greece to Athens where they met Lady Hester Stanhope. Like Childe Harold Galt visited Marathon and Parnassus, "drank the vaunted rill," and essayed to sing. Salonica was now his goal, but there were various obstacles to a speedy journey. A Turkish army under Veli Pasha had taken all the good horses. On reaching Salonica in October he decided it

would be a suitable starting-point for the overland route by which British goods were to be introduced to the Continent.

A few days later he was in Constantinople. The notes in his Journal are not very interesting. One entry describing the Sultan on his way to the mosque may be quoted. He "appeared to be about five-and-twenty, of a pale and passive countenance; his beard black and bushy, his eye dark and penetrating. In the cast of his features he bears a very striking likeness to Lord Aberdeen. He eyed us as he passed very particularly; I imagine from the circumstance of two using spectacles and one a quizzing glass." Galt has a gift for finding resemblances between Turks and Scots. A whirling figure in a penitential dance at Athens reminded him of Thomas Campbell, and an old officer at Marathonisi seemed to him like the Marquis of Huntly.

About this time his business plan seems to have taken fairly definite shape. In the vague narrative of his *Autobiography* it is not clear whether he had heard from Kirkman, Finlay & Co., or was acting on his own initiative. At all events it was arranged to send about a hundred bales of goods to Widdin to be shipped into Hungary by way of Orsova. Galt was to go ahead and make the necessary preparations. It was a thoroughly unpleasant journey. The only available lodgings were khans crowded with soldiers or wretched hovels, and his janissary proved a coward. At Sofia Veli Pasha granted him safe conduct for himself and the caravan of camels which was to follow. At Widdin he was suspected of being a spy in the employ of the Russians who were besieging the town. When this difficulty was overcome he made what business arrangements he could and returned to Constantinople. He reached London in the autumn of 1811, and at once tried to find backing for his enterprise. The intention of studying law was abandoned, a decision he later regretted when worn out by incessant book-making and commercial failures.

His hopes had been raised in Constantinople by the British ambassador, Stratford Canning, who said he was about to propose a plan of government for the Archipelago and that he

would recommend Galt to be placed at its head. But the Foreign Office had no word from Canning and was indifferent to Galt's scheme. This rebuff ended his share in the business, but his disappointment was not lessened by learning shortly afterwards that a profitable trade was being carried on by the route he had opened up.

He sat down to earn a living by literature. For two or three months he edited the *Political Review*, but the demands of a weekly paper were too constant for his patience. His two years in the East suggested a book of travels which was duly published and harshly treated by the critics.¹ Croker's sarcasm in the *Quarterly* was never forgiven by Galt, who thought that the article injured his career in Canada by misrepresenting his political principles. However that may be, it is hard to find anything to praise in Galt's book, which is an ill-arranged mass of trivial personal details, clumsy humour, commonplace remarks on antiquities, pages of statistics and arguments for a vigorous British policy in the East. While his book was in the press Galt was the guest of Dr. Tilloch, editor of the *Philosophical Magazine*. As Galt married Tilloch's daughter about a year later we may infer that his whole time was not spent in proof-reading.

Galt was proud of the industry and rhetoric displayed in his *Life of Wolsey* (1812).² The indifference and hostility of the critics were irritating. He meditated horsewhipping the sarcastic *Quarterly* reviewer if he could discover his identity. This article led to a curious meeting with the notorious Mary Ann Clarke, the ex-mistress of the Duke of York, who invited Galt to call on her, asserted that Croker was the offensive critic, and hinted that she could help Galt to his revenge. "After telling me this," says Galt, "she gave one of her know-

¹*Voyages and Travels in the Years 1809, 1810 and 1811* (1812). See *Quarterly Review* (June, 1812); *Critical Review* (May, 1812); *Monthly Review* (Aug., 1813); *Edinburgh Review* (April, 1814). A livelier and less pretentious volume was *Letters from the Levant* (1813) which was favourably noticed in the *British Critic* (Jan., 1814), and in the *Monthly Review* (Oct., 1814).

²See the *Quarterly* (Sept., 1812); *Critical Review* (Dec., 1812); *Monthly Review* (April and May, 1813); *British Critic* (Dec., 1813).

ing smiles, and said she was surprised to see me so young a man and so dressed, for she understood I was an old Scotch clergyman." He declined her unsavoury offer and later satisfied himself that Croker did not write the review.

Travel and biography having failed with critics and public Galt turned dramatist. His volume of five blank verse tragedies, four of which had been written on his travels, is an extraordinary illustration of his self-confidence and his complete lack of self-criticism. Two of his plays are sordid unconvincing stories; the others, *Agamemnon*, *Clytemnestra* and *Lady Macbeth* degrade and vulgarize great themes. *Macbeth*, troubled by what he calls "metaphysical phenomenae," is taunted by his wife, who asks:

Shall we confess we kill'd the King,
And mew contrition like two silly urchins,
Sick with the surfeit of the pantry's spoil?

Of all Galt's literary disasters this was the most complete. Even Scott, usually over-generous, said the tragedies were "the worst ever seen."¹

This, however, was not the last of Galt's dramatic ventures. There was talk in London of establishing a third theatre in addition to Drury Lane and Covent Garden. The managers, it was said, rejected plays unfairly—Galt shared this opinion after one of his own tragedies had been refused by both theatres. He accordingly started a periodical, first called *The Rejected Theatre* and later renamed *The New British Theatre*,² in which mortified genius might appeal to the public. Besides being editor Galt contributed eleven dramas. The only result of the undertaking was to justify the managers. Galt explained the failure by the worthlessness of the dramas submitted to him. His own contributions are a sufficient explanation. His chief pride was in *The Witness* which, through the influence of Scott's friend William Erskine, was acted for four

¹See the *Quarterly* (April, 1814); *Critical Review* (Nov., 1812); *British Critic* (May, 1814); *Monthly Review* (March, 1814).

²*The New British Theatre* was published later in four volumes (1814-15).

nights in Edinburgh in February, 1818, under the name of *The Appeal*. Lockhart and Captain Hamilton, author of *Cyril Thornton*, supplied a prologue and Scott an epilogue. Christopher North says many people thought Coleridge the author. "There has been nothing superior to it," wrote Galt, "in the theatrical exhibitions of our time."

What kind of living Galt made by literature is not clear. For a few months in 1813 he held a business post in Gibraltar, but it came to nothing. In the same year he doubled his financial obligations by marriage. Of his wife, Miss Elizabeth Tilloch, he tells us almost nothing. Whatever her character may have been—one friend of the family hints at ill-temper and extravagance, while another bestows the highest praise—her married life was not an easy one. Her husband at first won neither fame nor money; later he was absent for two years in Canada, and finally he was a helpless, suffering invalid. Miss Tilloch's father, according to Weir, aided the young couple at the start, but was forced to end his generosity by troubles of his own. Three children were born of the marriage, John (1814?), Thomas (1815), and Alexander (1817), two of whom were destined to make a mark in Canadian affairs.

For the next few years Galt supported his family by hack work for the publishers and by odd pieces of business which came his way. He contributed three biographies to the *Lives of the British Admirals*, wrote a life of Benjamin West, the historical painter, worked for the *Monthly Magazine* and other periodicals, and put together various compilations. He also tried his hand at novels. Of *The Majolo* (1816), a tale of suspense and mystery, only a few copies were printed. "The work," says Galt, "was never intended to fall into promiscuous hands." The precaution was scarcely necessary. *The Earthquake* (1820), a bewildering and unexciting succession of wanderings and violent deeds, reproduced some of Galt's experiences in the East.

During this period Galt had no settled abode. In 1817 and perhaps earlier he was living in Chelsea, in 1818 near Green-

ock, a place left desolate for him by the deaths of Spence (1815), Park (1817) and his father (1817).¹ A little later he was again in London. One of his Chelsea neighbours, Mrs. Katharine Thomson,² has left a picture of Galt as he was in these years. He was a man of great physical vigour, over six feet in height, with a gift for humorous stories told with a strong Scottish accent. Above all, he had confidence in himself both as author and as man of affairs, a confidence which, after years of drudgery and failure, was about to be justified.

¹His father is buried in Inverkip Street Burying Ground, Greenock. The inscription on the grave reads: Here are deposited the remains of John Galt, formerly shipmaster and merchant in Greenock, who died on the 6th August, 1817, in the 67th year of his age.

²Mrs. Thomson was the wife of Anthony Todd Thomson, the well-known physician. To him Galt dedicated his *Poems* (1833). Her reminiscences of Galt appeared in Bentley's *Miscellany* (vol. 18), and were afterwards reprinted, along with others, under the title *Recollections of Literary Characters and Celebrated Places* (1854).

CHAPTER II

THE SCOTCH NOVELS

Galt came into his own in 1820, the year when Charles Lamb found his true bent. And, as with Lamb, much of his best matter was drawn from memories of youth and boyhood, mellowed and softened by the lapse of thirty years. Always a hasty writer, Galt moved with ease and speed on this familiar ground, and the result in general was not slovenly workmanship. "For once," says his friend Gillies,¹ "the old maxim was reversed; for with him easy writing made easy and pleasant reading. He might therefore well suppose, as he too rashly did, that the road to fame and wealth by literature was open and smooth before him, for he could have scribbled such things *ad infinitum*, and found no end to the ridiculous exhibitions of Scottish character and phraseology in which he delighted." He boasted to Mrs. Thomson that he could write several pages a night. The books which give Galt his secure place in literature appeared, with the exception of *The Last of the Lairds*, within three years. *The Ayrshire Legatees* began to run in Blackwood's Magazine in June, 1820. In the next year the *Annals of the Parish* and *The Steamboat* were published. *The Provost*, *The Gathering of the West*, and *Sir Andrew Wylie* all belong to 1822; and *The Entail* was completed in the same year, though it did not come out till the beginning of 1823. All these works were published by Blackwood to whom Galt acknowledged his debt, declaring that "if there be any originality in my Scottish class of compositions, he is entitled to be considered as the first person who discovered it."²

¹R. P. Gillies (1788-1858), a friend of Scott and Wordsworth and an early contributor to Blackwood's. His recollections of Galt appeared in his *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran* (1851), vol. 3, ch. 3.

²*Autobiog.* II., 235. Galt was a little proud of his position among Maga's contributors. A correspondent of Constable's wrote to him (Dec. 9, 1821), that Galt was said to be the "ostensible editor" of the Magazine. (See *Archibald Constable and His Literary Correspondents*, II., 371.)

The plan of *The Ayrshire Legatees*¹ is simple enough and not very original. It was suggested to Galt by the artless remarks of country visitors in London to whom he acted as guide. The Rev. Dr. Pringle, minister of Garnock, is left a legacy by his cousin, and goes to London with his family to make the necessary arrangements. In the letters of the travellers to their friends at home, which form the chief part of the book, Galt no doubt took *Humphry Clinker* for his model. The little group which receives and discusses the letters is also pleasantly sketched. The members of the Pringle family have some resemblance to Smollett's characters. Mrs. Pringle, unequalled for economy and management among ministers' wives, independent in her spelling, and deeply distressed at English extravagance and the state of the gospel in London, is perhaps the most entertaining. "Tell Mrs. Glibbans," she writes, "that I have not heard of no sound preacher as yet in London—the want of which is no doubt the great cause of the crying sins of the place. What would she think to hear of newspapers selling by tout of horn on the Lord's day? And on the Sabbath night the change houses are more throng than on the Saturday! I am told, but as yet I cannot say that I have seen the evil myself, with my own eyes, that in the summer-time there are tea-gardens, where the tradesmen go to smoke their pipes of tobacco, and to en-

Maginn, the Irish humourist, wrote to Blackwood about Galt in 1823. "In one thing you were decidedly wrong; you ought not to have allowed him to get so thorough an insight into the method of managing the magazine." (See Mrs. Oliphant's *William Blackwood and His Sons*, I. 390.) Besides his intimacy with Blackwood, Galt was familiar with many of the chief figures of Edinburgh literary society. He knew Lockhart fairly well and Scott slightly. Mrs. Gordon, Christopher North's daughter, says he was a frequent guest at her father's house. Constable Galt speaks of as his old friend. He dined with him on the day when Constable "received from the then undeclared author of *Waverley*, the manuscripts of that celebrated novel, and of several others belonging to the same series." (See note to *Lawrie Todd*). It was Constable who urged Galt to write the life of Robert Paterson, the founder of the Bank of England and of the Darien expedition. It would have been a congenial subject to Galt, but he did no more with it than make some preliminary studies and notes.

¹*The Ayrshire Legatees* ran in Blackwood's from June, 1820, to Feb., 1821, an instalment appearing every number except Nov., 1820. *The Steamboat* began in Feb., 1821, and ended in December.

tertain their wives and children, which can be nothing less than a bringing of them to an untimely end." Excellent, too, is the gravity of Dr. Pringle who is unwittingly betrayed into novel-reading by "a History of the Rebellion, anent the hand that an English gentleman of the name of Waverley had in it." The romantic Miss Pringle and her brother Andrew the advocate, are less interesting than their elders. The description of George III's funeral and Andrew's comments on well known London people of the day, such as Sir Francis Burdett and Galt's old travelling companion, Hobhouse, are not in the best taste. Personalities were too common a resource of Blackwood's in the early days, and Galt admitted later that the device was a mistake.¹

Galt's plan of bringing simple Scottish folk to London had been thought of some years earlier by another writer. In December, 1814, Lockhart wrote to Constable about a sketch he was composing which was to deal with classes of Scotch society so far "quite untouched." "The hero is one John Todd, a true-blue, who undertakes a journey to London in a Berwick smack, and is present in the metropolis at the same time with the Emperor of Russia and the other illustrious visitors in June last." If Lockhart's story was ever finished it does not seem to have been published.²

The Ayrshire Legatees won immediate popularity, but was a puzzle to the critics. Galt's name was not on the title-page, and shortly after it began to run in the magazine appeared *The Earthquake* declaring itself to be by the same author. The *Quarterly* expressed delighted surprise at the difference between the two works. But the *Monthly Review* (Nov., 1821) went further, and could not believe them to be by the

¹Galt's repentance was not on the grounds of taste. "I committed a mistake which has prevented that work from being understood by a few. I there made use of the real names of the actual persons with whom I intended to be jocular, and the consequence has been that while I only tried to describe caricatures as seen by others I have been supposed to speak my own opinions." Introduction to *Stories of the Study* (1883). See also *Lit. Life*, I., 227f, and *Autobiog.* II., 229.

²*Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents*, III., 151-2. Lang's *Life of Lockhart*, I., 75.

same pen. Most emphatic of all was the *London Magazine* which reviewed *The Earthquake* in January, 1821. "We are absolutely sickened by this—not by the work itself, though it is very absurd and very offensive, but by the fraud of which it is attempted to be made the means. It is expressed on its title-page to be by the author of *The Ayrshire Legatees*. We have no hesitation to declare that it is not by the author of *The Ayrshire Legatees*." The reviewer confesses he had thought Scott the author of the *Legatees*, but that the introduction of actual individuals in the book was unlike Scott's manner. "We have heard it reported," he goes on, "that we owe this *Earthquake* to Mr. John Galt; but cannot affirm that the report is correct. No one, however, who knows anything of Mr. Galt's famous tragedies would ever suspect him of being the writer of a set of acute, close, unaffected representations of actual life, in the shrewd, homely language of the minister and members of an Ayrshire congregation of Presbyterians." How long Galt's authorship was concealed is hard to say. In June, 1822, Christopher North flatly announced the truth in Blackwood's, and declared that the successive chapters of the *Legatees* "were immediately and universally acknowledged to be the very best articles that ever had been in any periodical work, and deservedly high as the character of our miscellany then stood, yet *The Ayrshire Legatees* increased our sale prodigiously."

The reception of the book induced Galt to offer another work to Blackwood, of which the private history is rather curious. When very young Galt, it seems, wished to write a book that would be for Scotland what *The Vicar of Wakefield* is for England, and early began to observe in what respects the minister of a parish differed from the general inhabitants of the country. But the idea was not followed up with energy and might have come to nothing. During a solitary Sunday walk to the village of Inverkip near Greenock, while noticing the various changes in the place and reflecting on old vanished conditions, the intention of writing a minister's sedate adventures returned upon him, and he felt something like the glow

with which Rousseau conceived his essay on the arts and sciences. For many years, however, business and the vicissitudes of life suspended the design, though it was constantly remembered. Finally, in 1813, the year before *Waverley*, the work began to take shape as the *Annals of the Parish*.¹ When it was nearly finished Galt wrote to his old acquaintance Constable, the bookseller; but the reply was not encouraging. Scottish novels, he was told, would not do. As a result of Constable's answer the unfinished manuscript was thrown into a drawer and forgotten.

One Sunday years afterwards, Galt discovered it while setting his papers in order. He read it over, as a stranger might do, and submitted it to a friend at dinner the same day. They thought well enough of it to send it off to Blackwood, by whom it was warmly welcomed. Priding himself on "taking an interest in the literary department" of his business, Blackwood made several slight omissions and alterations in the manuscript with Galt's permission. Finally, in 1821, appeared *Annals of the Parish, or The Chronicle of Dalmailing, during the Ministry of the Rev. Micah Balwhidder, written by himself, arranged and edited by the author of The Ayrshire Legatees*. The history of book, begun early, forgotten for years, and rediscovered by chance, reminds one of the story of the fishing-tackle and *Waverley*.

Its success was great and immediate.² Henry Mackenzie, author of *The Man of Feeling*, and a veteran figure in Scottish literature, extended his "sincere and cordial approbation"; Croker, ignorant of the authorship, admitted it was "very

¹During his walk to Inverkip Galt thought of making a village schoolmaster instead of a minister the central figure of the book, but the intention was abandoned. A specimen of the earlier scheme was later used by Galt in *Eben Erskine*, I., 71-87.

²See *Blackw. Mag.*, May, 1821, June, 1822; *Quart. Review*, April, 1821; *Edin. Review*, Oct., 1823; *Monthly Review*, Nov., 1821; Lockhart's *Scott*, c. 52; Mrs. Oliphant's *William Blackwood and His Sons*, I., 448-452; *Scots Mag.*, June, 1821. Byron "praised the *Annals of the Parish* very highly, as also the *Entail*. . . . Some scenes of which, he said, had affected him very much. 'The characters of Mr. Galt's novels have an identity,' added Byron, 'that reminds me of Wilkie's pictures.'" (*Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington*.)

good"; Scott read it with pleasure; Jeffrey's verdict was extremely favourable, and Byron praised it highly.¹

The *Annals* has the least alloy of all Galt's books. There are few things in literature more real and in better keeping than this quiet chronicle of half a century (1760-1810) in the life of a Scotch village. The parish minister, who, in the evening of his days set down the memorable events of his little world year by year, reveals at the same time his benevolent and complacent character. He relates his stormy "placing" against the will of the parishioners, his gradual winning of their affections, his three courtings and marriages, and his endless activity in and out of the pulpit. Though master of no "kirk-filling eloquence," he can command a strain of simple, telling pathos, and his humour is not the less pleasant and genial because it is often unconscious. Nothing, for instance, can be better in its way than Balwhidder's account of how, when a recruiting party came to Dalmailing, Mr. Archibald Dozendale, one of his elders, had a sober tumbler of toddy with him at the Manse, "marvelling exceedingly where these fearful portents and changes would stop, both of us being of opinion, that the end of the world was drawing nearer and nearer." The great events of the outside world, the American Rebellion and the French Revolution, have a place in the record only so far as they intrude on the narrow sphere of his parish. Things near at hand loom large to the simple annalist. "In the same year, and on the same day of the same month, that his Sacred Majesty King George, the third of the name, came to his crown and kingdom, I was placed and settled as the minister of Dalmailing." The year 1763 was notable because "the King granted peace to the French, and Charlie Malcolm that went to sea in the Tobacco trader came home to see his mother."

¹Hogg, however, was less enthusiastic. "I am surprised," Blackwood wrote to him, May 15, 1821, "at your having such a very humble opinion of the 'Parish Annals,' but I am happy to tell you that it is very differently estimated by Mr. Henry Mackenzie, Sir Walter Scott, Professor Wilson, Mr. Lockhart and fifty others, who are all loud in its praises. I am also happy to say that you are mistaken as to its sale, for in three or four days there were nearly 500 copies sold in London, and I have already sold here nearly 400 copies. In short, I have seldom published a more popular or valuable book." Mrs. Oliphant, *op. cit.*, I., 343.

Galt's purpose had been to write a Scottish *Vicar of Wakefield*, and indeed the two books have points in common. Several of the reviewers saw the resemblance. Both Galt and Goldsmith know how to describe simple life, and both draw on reminiscence and personal experience for their material. Both are happy in autobiography, and neither is very skilful in contriving a plot. Here is Galt's advantage, for his plan frees him from the necessity of inventing a story which would probably have been no more convincing than Goldsmith's. "Any talent that I ever possessed," he admitted,¹ "lay in the delineation of what may be called moral and visible description; and I am sure, when I worked with a story it was in comparatively galling harness." Free from this bondage, Galt is at liberty to introduce the whole range of village humours, and for this he does not need to go beyond his own experience and observation. The personages and incidents are, for the most part, those he had known or heard of in his youth. Dalmailing itself is a reality, for Galt tells us that the scene is actually laid in Dreghorn, a couple of miles from Irvine. "In a still evening, I sometimes think of its beautiful church amidst a clump of trees . . . nor is the locality to me uninteresting, as it happens to be the burial place of my 'forebears'."²

The Steamboat is made of flimsier and cheaper material than either of its predecessors; its fun tends more to burlesque and relies more on local allusions and personalities. A score of stories, some very short, and several cut off at the critical moment under a mistaken idea of humour, are loosely strung together on a thread of narrative in which Thomas Duffle, cloth merchant of Glasgow, relates his voyages up and down the Clyde and his great journey to London to see the coronation of George IV. Dr. and Mr. Pringle of the *Legatees* are his fellow-passengers to London. The introduction of the same characters into more than one book came to be used frequently by Galt, and helps to increase the reality of his novels.

¹*Lit. Life*, I., 317.

²*Autobiog.* II., 228.

Most of the tales are commonplace, and one, *A Jeanie Deans in Love*, is a detestable parody of one of Scott's greatest scenes. The story of Mrs. Ogle¹ and Mr. Jamphrey, the chief of "the criticising policemen of Edinburgh," is an excellent piece of Scots and an inexcusable indulgence in personalities. Jeffrey is thinly disguised under the changed name, and an incident in his private life is used to raise a laugh at his expense. Even Lockhart, a serious offender himself in these matters, was displeased. "Mrs. Ogle is exquisite," he wrote to Blackwood, "but I am sorry to say I think altogether unfair. You may have a right to quiz Jeffrey . . . but nobody has a right to meddle with the private amusements of a private lady. How would Mr. Galt like to have an account in a Magazine of a little frolic played off in her family by a female of his acquaintance?"² Another butt of the Blackwood group whom Galt introduces is James Scott, a Glasgow dentist, who was frequently ridiculed as the Odontist and represented as a contributor to the magazine. "How would you like it," the injured man asked Blackwood, "if I were to sit down and write a deal of stuff about you, Mr. Galt or Mr. Wilson?"³ The author of the *Annals* should have been above offensive personalities, and he could not, like Lockhart, plead the indiscretion of youth. The ludicrous description of the coronation expresses Galt's own opinion of the ceremony, which, he said, lessened his respect for the tricks of state more than anything he ever witnessed. Among the spectators, "an elderly man, about fifty, with a fair grey head, and something of the appearance of a gawsy good-humoured country laird" is pointed out to Thomas Duffle as "the Author of *Waverley*."

In *The Provost* Galt did for a west country town what he had done for a rural district in the *Annals*. He himself thought the later book a better piece of work, but few will agree with him. The periods covered in the two chronicles are

¹Mrs. Ogle was Miss Stirling Graham, famous in Edinburgh society for her personations, who described her pranks in *Mystifications* (1859). See Dr. John Brown's *Horae Subsecivae*, Third Series.

²Mrs. Oliphant, op. cit. I., 218.

³Ibid., I., 212-3.

much the same; in both are heard the distant thunders of the American troubles and the French Revolution. The skill in autobiography, the vernacular humour, the ever-present sense of reality are common to both. Both are the ordered results of observation and memory, for Gudetown is in reality Irvine, and the original of Provost Pawkie was chief magistrate there in Galt's boyhood.¹ But there is more variety of character, incident and feeling in the *Annals*. The spirit of *The Provost* is meaner and harder, and the atmosphere of the little town, seething with its own petty concerns, is at times unpleasantly oppressive. Provost Pawkie himself, who was thrice made an instrument to represent the supreme power and authority of Majesty in the royal burgh of Gudetown, has less of the simple stuff of humanity than the minister of Dalmailing. He is concerned to set forth the successive triumphs of his career, his prosperity as a merchant, his dexterous handling of the town council and his services to the burgh. His complacent narrative is broken occasionally, however, by an exciting incident such as the raid of the press gang. At times, too, the tone rises above the stuffiness of burgh politics to a level of simple poignant emotion. The description of the storm, *The Windy Yule*, would, as Jeffrey remarked, "not discredit the pen of the great novelist himself," and the execution of Jean Gaisling for child murder is told with a harsh strength and grim humour, relieved by tenderness for "the poor guideless creature." If Galt had had it in him to write *The Heart of Midlothian* there would have been no reprieve for Effie Deans.

The reception of *The Provost* showed no falling-off in Galt's popularity. An edition of two thousand was sold in a fortnight, and a second edition melted like snow off a dyke. To Galt, who viewed literature only as a trade, there were other results no less pleasant. "You may rest assured," Blackwood told him, "that I will give you more for this volume than I did for the *Annals*."² Galt was proud of his earn-

¹Bailie Fullarton, a candle maker by trade. His portrait hangs in the Council Chamber, and characteristic stories are still told of him in the Burgh.

²Mrs. Oliphant, op. cit., I., 415.

ing power, and refers to his success in *The Last of the Lairds*. "That silly auld hawering creature, Balwhidder o' Dalmailing," says the Laird, "got a thousand pounds sterling, doun on Blackwood's counter, in red gold, for his clishmaclavers; and Provost Pawkie's widow has had twice the dooble o't, they say, for the Provost's life."¹

"I am a little anxious to see *Sir Andrew Wylie*," wrote Croker to Blackwood (Dec. 28, 1821), "the *Annals of the Parish* and *The Ayrshire Legatees* were not only good, but they gave promise of greater things; and I should not be surprised, if the author but be a little careful in what he does . . . to find him acknowledged hereafter as second, and only second, to the great Oudeis of *Waverley*. This I know may look like an extravagant anticipation; but there are pages in the *Annals* and spots in the *Legatees* which would be shining places in the *Pirate*. If he be a young author he may scatter his wild oats about; but if he be anything like a veteran, he should husband his resources and make not more than one great effort per annum."²

Croker was probably disappointed when he saw *Sir Andrew Wylie*, for in it Galt's strength and weakness stand side by side. His original intention was to exhibit the rise of a friendless Scot in London, but on the advice of Blackwood he abandoned the idea of autobiography, gave his hero a patron and elaborated his plot into a wearisome and unconvincing narrative of Andrew's progress from cottar's son to lawyer, member of parliament and baronet. But we are interested only in the outset and close to his career. The boyhood of the "auld-farand bairn" in his grandmother's cottage and under the modest dominie is told with the gentleness and charm which belong to reminiscent writing. The return of the successful adventurer to the little Ayrshire village and his marriage with the Laird of Craiglands' daughter—Galt's only real

¹He was not always pleased with Blackwood's methods. A request for an advance of £200 was refused by Blackwood, and Galt wrote to Tilloch (March, 1822): "He has acted more shabbily than any person I have yet had to deal with in literary matters."

²Mrs. Oliphant, I., 474-5.

heroine—are a pleasant ending to a very unequal book. Humour and pathos are finely mingled, and in a manner wholly Scottish, in the death of the old Laird.

But when Galt crosses the Tweed he loses his cunning. The picture of English society and its eager reception of Andrew is impossible, though Galt is obviously anxious to show his familiarity with the world of London.¹ Andrew's patron, the Earl of Sandyford—intended by Galt as a portrait of the Earl of Blessington—is a Byronic figure, who has “rushed into the whirlpool of fashionable dissipation . . . as if he sought, by the velocity of a headlong career, to escape the miseries of some mysterious sorrow.” The breach between him and Lady Sandyford, whom he had loved since “he beheld her in the graces of her virgin years, bounding like the fawn amidst the stately groves that surround the venerable magnificence of her ancestral home,” is healed by Andrew's friendly offices. The book is said to have been the most popular of Galt's novels in England. “I was pleased the other day, said Hazlitt,² “on going into a shop to ask ‘If they had any of the Scotch novels?’ to be told ‘That they had just sent out the last, *Sir Andrew Wylie*!’ Mr. Galt will also be pleased with this answer.” But it was less popular in Scotland than its forerunners. Jeffrey found the story “clumsily and heavily managed and the personages of polite life very unsuccessfully brought in.”³ Galt's fellow-craftsman, Miss Ferrier, declared, “I have not read *Sir Andrew Wylie*, as I can't endure that man's writings, and I'm told the vulgarity of this *beats print*.”⁴ It is easy to forgive part of the verdict, for the display of simple Scottish humors

¹“Were I to get sufficient encouragement, I think I could write a novel on the progress of a Scotchman in London, embracing all varieties of metropolitan life, that would assuredly take.” (Galt to Blackwood, Jan. 30, 1822) Mrs. Oliphant, op. cit. I., 452. Croker thought little of Galt's knowledge of London life. “His characters of public men,” he wrote of the *Legatees*, “show that he does not know much of them. He makes some little blunders as to the state of the higher society in this town.” Mrs. Oliphant, I., 449.

²*On the Pleasure of Hating*.

³*Edin. Rev.*, Oct., 1823.

⁴*Memoir of Susan Ferrier*, by J. A. Doyle, p. 157.

in London is much better managed in her own charming story *Marriage* (1818).

There is plenty of boisterious local fun in *The Gathering of the West, or We're Come to See the King*, which appeared in *Blackwood's* in September, 1822. It is a *jeu d'esprit* on George IV's visit to Scotland, in which Galt describes the stir caused among "the bustling, ruddy, maritime Greenock folks," and the radical weaver lads of Paisley, and the pompous magistrates of Glasgow.¹

If *The Entail, or The Lairds of Grippy* is not Galt's best book, it is at least his best story, and, indeed, his only success in constructing an effective plot. The story follows the history of a family through three generations somewhat in the manner of Zola, and records with dour deliberation the inevitable births, marriages and deaths. Claud Walkinshaw, grandson of the last Laird of Kittlestoneheugh, is left in poverty by his grandfather's ruin and his father's early death. His hard narrow nature is raised to a kind of greatness by his single great passion to redeem the inheritance of his ancestors. As a pedlar in the Border country and as a cloth merchant in Glasgow he gathers enough gear to buy the farm of Grippy, part of the old family estates. He further improves his position by a sordid marriage with the Laird of Plealands' daughter, who bears him three sons and a daughter. The second son Watty, a "natural" from his birth, inherits the Plealands, which Claud contrives to exchange for the unredeemed portion of his ancestral property. He then disinherits his eldest and favourite son Charles, in order that the whole original family estate may be vested in Watty. When Charles dies leaving a helpless family the old man is seized by remorse, but is struck down by paralysis before he can right the wrong.

¹Both Weir and Rodger declare that the skit gave offence to many. On Aug. 13, 1822, he writes to the Countess of Blessington: "Here, all are on tip-toe for the King; but my worthy countrymen proceed so very considerably in their loyalty that nothing amusing has yet occurred. The best thing I have heard of is, the ladies who intend to be presented practising the management of their trains with table-cloths pinned to their tails." *Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington*, by R. R. Madden, vol. 3., p. 235.

The third son George, less passionate and more sordid than his father, has Watty proved an imbecile and wrests the lands from him. After George meets his death by shipwreck the estate ultimately comes to Charles's son, and belated poetic justice is dealt out.

The book is not of equal merit throughout. Galt, unlike Balzac, whose work is more than once recalled by *The Entail*, loses the courage of his hard realism; Claud's remorse is poignant but somewhat unexpected. There is less of such edifying concession to morality in the description of Mr. Cayenne's death in the *Annals*, one of Galt's most daring achievements. With the removal of Claud's dominating figure the story falls to a lower level, though his widow, the Leddy Grippy, who has few equals among the women of Scottish fiction, remains to the end with her genius for intrigue and her terribly competent vernacular; and there is also the great scene of the shipwreck. The latter part of the book is weighted down by Mrs. Eadie, a majestic lady troubled with second sight, who represents Galt's only serious attempt to portray Highland character. She is an unfortunate concession to the romantic fiction of the day, and is strangely out of place in the bleak and blackguardly world of the Walkinshaws. Watty, the "natural," is the most pathetic figure in any of Galt's books, and any English novelist might be proud of the court scene in which he is declared an imbecile. "Am I found guilty," he exclaims on hearing the verdict of Fatuity, "oh, surely, sir, ye'll no hang me, for I cou'dna help it?" The hopeless remainder of his life is indicated with masterly restraint, and Galt wisely refuses to show us the death-scene of the poor daft Laird of Grippy.¹

¹Galt has described several of these "naturals," common enough figures then in the country districts of Scotland, where there were no asylums to receive them and where the seclusion from the outside world tended to accentuate peculiarities. Daft Jamie in *Sir Andrew Wylie*, whose favourite haunt was Greenock because "the folk there were just like himsel'" and whose remarks often showed unexpected shrewdness, is a type of these strange character. He resembles Davie Gellatley, the major-domo of Tully-Veolan, who "had just so much solidity as kept on the windy side of insanity." There is a wilder and more tragic strain

The legal intricacies of the plot are elaborately worked out, but are more completely fused with the human interest of the story than in George Eliot's *Lelix Holt*. The rascally lawyers are a striking contrast to Scott's genial pictures of Edinburgh legal society. There are the virtuous lawyers also, but like the other good people in the book they are not very interesting.

Galt himself says strangely little about *The Entail*, and hardly seems aware of its greatness, though he was pleased with its reception. "I had a note on Saturday from Lord Gwydyr," he writes to Blackwood, "telling me it was much talked of in Brighton, and this morning the Speaker told me he thought it very amusing. Justice Park, and he is a judge you will say, thinks it the best of my works. . . . Thomson considers it far the best thing I have done, and showing power above anything in my former sketches. Dr. Tilloch also speaks well of it, but I have not seen him; and divers ladies and booksellers speak very favourably."¹ Both Scott and Byron, he tells us, read the book three times. Christopher North in Blackwood's (Jan., 1823), declared that Galt was now entitled to "take his place in the second rank of British novelists. When we say this, which we do fearlessly, we consider him inferior only to two living writers of fictitious narratives—to him whom we need not name, and to Miss Edgeworth. *The Entail* is out of all sight the best thing he has done, and shews his genius to have stamina that will yet send forth still more vigorous shoots and shady branches." The forecast was not unreasonable, but it was never fulfilled. Galt's best work was behind him.

A new field was opened up by Galt's Scottish novels, and his claim that he had had few precursors was reasonable. The life of the villages and small towns of Scotland had not till now found a chronicler.

in Jenny Gaffaw and her idiot daughter Meg in the *Annals*. Meg "was a sort of household familiar among us, and there was much like the inner side of wisdom in the pattern of her sayings, many of which are still preserved as proverbs."

¹Mrs. Oliphant, op. cit. I., 453.

Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton in her *Cottagers of Glenburnie* (1808) was in some sort a forerunner of Galt. She described the sluttish and toilsome life of country folk in the eighteenth century with a fidelity which won the praise of Scott, though she was led to overcharge the picture at times in her eagerness to show the need of activity and cleanliness. Her lessons of good housewifery brought, it is said, comeliness and order into many a Scottish cottage.¹

On Scott's great national canvas there are sketches which remind one of Galt's work—Mrs. Mailsetter and her gossips in *The Antiquary*, Nicol Jarvie resembling Provost Pawkie in his sedate municipal dignity, Meg Dods with her vernacular and managing ways. This side of Scott's work was no doubt very congenial to Galt, who singles out *The Antiquary* and *St. Ronan's Well* for special praise, and who in *The Entail* actually introduces Mrs. Jarvie, "the wife of the far-famed Bailie Nicol, the same Matty, who lighted the worthy magistrate to the Tolbooth on that memorable night when he, the son of the deacon, found his kinsman Rob Roy there." But on the whole Scott moves in a different world from Galt. His relation to Galt resembles that of Shakespeare to the citizen drama of his age. Scott's concern is with Dandie Dinmont and his dogs, with statesmen and nobles, with kings and queens; Galt's is with bailies and merchants, ministers and small lairds. Equally at home with gentle and simple, Scott does not linger gladly in the narrow sphere of Gudetown or Dalmailing, where romance receives small encouragement. For it is romance more than anything else which separates Scott and Galt. In the *Waverley Novels* romance upsets the lives even of cautious sober townsmen like Nicol Jarvie, but the career of

¹Scott refers to Mrs. Hamilton (1758-1816) in *Waverley* (last chap.), and *Heart of Midlothian* (ch. 10). Mrs. Hamilton was unmarried, but after a while took the style of "Mrs." or "Mistress." Curiously enough *The Cottagers of Glenburnie*, like *Waverley* and the *Annals* was for a while laid aside and all but forgotten by its author. (See Miss Benger's *Memoirs of Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton* (1819), vol. I., 183-4.) Miss Benger calls the book "a Tale in the manner of Wilkie," the comparison which Byron had applied to Galt. Jeffrey's review in the *Edinburgh* (July, 1808) is excellent.

Provost Pawkie moves on majestically, undisturbed by any such frivolous intrusion. Romance, declares Mrs. Soorocks in *The Last of the Lairds*, is "just a thing for playactors, and the likes o' Sir Walter, to mak a clishmaclaver o'." While the darling subject of Scott is the Jacobite rising of '45, Galt is at his best in describing the changes which followed the rebellion and went to the making of modern Scotland. The romance in Galt's Scottish fictions is that of material progress, not that of a lost cause. It is appropriate that it was from the *Annals* that J. S. Mill borrowed the word Utilitarian.

Galt valued these books for what he called their "likeliness," that is, their historical truth. The absence of a regular plot in the *Annals*, *The Provost* and *The Ayrshire Legatees* made them deficient as novels in his opinion, and he regarded them rather as theoretical local histories. Looking upon literature as a record of things done and as a harmonious ordering of memories and observations, Galt was apt to belittle invention. Men, he argued, can only combine the old; and no ingenuity can make an entirely new thing. In other words, Galt chiefly valued the kind of invention which he himself possessed. He was not content like Scott merely to amuse his age; he wished also to play the dominie. In all his works he kept "the instructive principle more or less in view," and looked upon the novel as a vehicle for teaching. "Indeed, it is not in this age that a man of ordinary common sense would enter into competition, in recreative stories, with a great genius who possessed the attention of all, I mean Sir Walter Scott."¹ The truth of art was not enough for Galt; he also aimed at truth of fact. It is this which gives his west country fictions their air of reality, so that Wilson declared the *Annals* was not a book but a fact, and Blackwood's mother read it with delight as the record of an honest and upright minister of the gospel till she learned with grief and astonishment that it was a novel.

The part of Scottish history which Galt describes was a natural choice. The last half of the eighteenth century was

¹*Autobiog.*, II., 210.

the only settled and undisturbed period of any length which Scotland had enjoyed for centuries. Never before in her history had there been an opportunity for the full development of her resources. With peace came all the changes which transformed the industrial and social life of the country. No subject could be more congenial to Galt than the chronicling of such progress. For once and once only the rival ambitions which distracted his career found common ground and were reconciled. The awakening of Scotland was a theme which appealed to him as a man of letters and as a man of commercial schemes and projects.

The general spirit of improvement which made itself felt after the Forty-Five affected the whole country in varying degrees and different ways. "The minds of men were excited to new enterprizes; a new genius, as it were, had descended upon the earth, and there was an erect and outlooking spirit abroad that was not to be satisfied with the taciturn regularity of ancient affairs."¹

The history of Dalmailing recorded in the *Annals* is that of a typical Ayrshire parish. At the beginning of the chronicle Balwhidder's parishioners were shut off from the world by many barriers. It was a great event when Mr. Kibbock got a newspaper twice a week from Edinburgh.² The roads, foul, stony, and unsavoury with middens, were improved, and in 1789 Balwhidder records with astonishment that a coach went from Dalmailing to Glasgow between breakfast and dinner—"a thing that could not, when I came to the parish, have been thought within the compass of man."³ Such changes brought new luxuries and comforts. "For times, gudeman," said the Leddy Grippy to her husband, "are no noo as when you and me cam thegither. Then a bein house and a snod but and ben was a' that was lookit for; but sin genteelity came into fashion lads and lassies hae grown leddies and gentlemen, and a Glasgow wife saullying to the kirk wi' her muff and her man-

¹*Annals*, c. xxix.

²*Ibid.*, c. x., xviii.

³*Ibid.*, c. xxx.

tle looks as puckered wi' pride as my lord's leddy."¹ Even in Dalmailing the simple snood began to give way to "French millendery."² Various changes helped to soften and refine manners. Tea-drinking, opposed by the older generation with their memories of "the lang-syne nights of claret," gradually made its way. In time it became a rare thing to meet "decent ladies coming home with red faces, tozy and cosh from a posset masking."³ Balwhidder also set his face against the drunken extravagance which was the rule at burials.⁴

Such reforms were the outcome of altered industrial conditions. The coal mines—there were three beside Dalmailing—began it. Cotton-mills followed, and new towns, such as Cayenneville in the *Annals*, sprang up to house the employees. At the end of his ministry Balwhidder recognizes that the old quiet isolation of a country parish is gone for ever. "We had intromitted so much with concerns of trade, that we were become a part of the great web of commercial reciprocities, and felt in our corner and extremity every touch or stir that was made on any part of the texture."⁵

Changes in agriculture were slower than those in commerce; but after the middle of the century reforms began to come fairly quickly. Ignorant traditional methods and cumbersome implements were gradually laid aside. The pioneers belonged to a different class from the leaders in industrial development. Great lawyers like Lord Kames and noblemen like the Earl of Eglinton—the Lord Eglesham of the *Annals*—led the way. Wealthy nabobs such as Mr. Galore in *The Provost* also played a part. East Lothian was the headquarters of agricultural reform in Scotland. The original of Mr. Coulter in the *Annals* was Andrew Wight of Ormiston who was invited to Ayrshire by Lord Eglinton. "There had been no such man in the agriculturing line among us before. . . .

¹*Entail*, c. xxxvi.

²*Annals*, c. ix.

³*Annals*, c. ii., iii. The importance of tea in the smuggling trade is also described—*Annals*, c. ii., v., xi., xix and *Betheral*, c. xx.

⁴*Last of the Lairds*, c. iii. *Entail*, c. ix. *Annals*, c. xxiv., xlv., cp. *The Bride of Lammermoor*, c. ii.

⁵*Annals*, c. xlv.

He turned all to production, and it was wonderful what an increase he made the land bring forth. He was from far beyond Edinburgh, and had got his insight among the Lothian farmers, so that he knew what crop should follow another, and nothing could surpass the regularity of his rigs and furrows."¹ Run-rig cultivation fell into disuse; fields were enclosed, fallowed and drained; leases were lengthened, so that a tenant could secure the benefit of improvements if he chose to make them. Turnips began to be sown and supplied a better winter-food for cattle than straw and mashed whins. New dairying methods brought profit to many a thrifty household such as that of the second Mrs. Balwhidder.²

The treelessness of Scotland, long a subject of English satire, now began to disappear. Mr. Kibbock "planted mounts of fir-trees on the bleak and barren tops of the hills of his farm, the which everybody . . . considered as a thrashing of the water and raising of bells."³ But when it was seen that the fields were sheltered and that he got wood for fences his example was widely followed by neighbouring lairds.

The political development kept pace with the advance in industry and agriculture. The agitation against patronage in the church is vividly illustrated in the stormy "placing" of Mr. Balwhidder. The vigorous feeling called forth by this question was later transferred to political causes. The abuses in municipal politics and the growing protests against them are fully exposed in *The Provost*. Galt shows, too, how the French Revolution stirred the country as the smaller questions of county, burghs and ecclesiastical reform had not done. Like the American War it created a keen desire for news which the Scottish press was not adequate to satisfy. The newly established bookseller in Dalmailing imported a London newspaper for the mill-hands who met nightly at the Cross Keys to discuss French affairs. In this Dalmailing was typical of the

¹Ibid, c. vii.

²*Annals*, c. vi. *Sir Andrew Wylie*, c. xc. *The Cottagers of Glenburnie*, c. xiii., gives only too faithful a picture of the old dairy methods.

³*Annals*, c. vi., xxi.

whole country which began to be covered by a network of village clubs and debating societies, to the alarm of quiet men like Balwhidder. Even Provost Pawkie, with all his love of jobbing and corruption was forced to admit "that the peremptory will of authority was no longer sufficient for the rule of mankind."¹

There was opposition to all these changes. The smaller lairds saw with dismay their remains of feudal grandeur being snatched from them. They naturally resented the importance attached to new-fangled ideas. Auldbiggings, in *The Last of the Lairds*, is a type of their gloomy, decayed mansion-houses with "mortgage-mouldered gables," the inevitable dovecote, shapeless mass of outbuildings, broken gateposts and ill-kept garden full of old-fashioned flowers and surrounded by an untrimmed hedge.² Here they lived in sulky seclusion and looked out blackly on a changing world. They railed at the high taxes and wages and at the liberty and equality spirit of the times. "It was a black day when poor Scotland saw the incoming pestilence of the cotton jennies. The reformers and them were baith cleckit at the same time, and they'll live and thrive, and I hope will be damned thegither. . . . The vera weavers in Glasgow and Paisley hae houses, I'm told, that the Craiglands here wouldna be a byre to. Can ony gude come, but vice and immorality, from sic upsetting in a Christian kingdom? . . . It's enough to . . . gar a bodie scunner to hear o' weavers in coaches. . . . I would as soon sit in a Relief Kirk as darken the door o' ony sic cattle. . . . Is't not as clear as a pike-staff that trade and traffic are to be the ruin o' this country?"³ In *The Provost* we see how, as time went on, the gentry had to abate in their pretensions and consent to mix with the "gawsie, big-bellied burgesses, not a few of whom had heritable bonds on their estates."⁴

¹*Provost*, c. xxviii.

²*Last of the Lairds*, c. i. *Sir Andrew Wylie*, c. vii. Compare Tully Veolan in *Waverley*.

³*Sir Andrew Wylie*, c. xc., xciii.

⁴*Provost*, c. xxxiv., xxxv.

The agricultural reforms had to fight their way step by step. There was more sympathy for Mungo Campbell the exciseman, who shot Lord Eglinton in 1769, than for his victim, whose new notions had made him unpopular.¹ When he introduced "that outlandish practice from the east countrie which, for a better name, is called rotation of crops,"² many folk denounced it as an attempt to defeat the plan of the Creator who meant the earth to be clothed in green grass. The Laird of Auldbiggings maintained that "national decay, agricultural distresses, broken merchants, ravelled manufacturers, and brittle bankers" were never heard of before turnip-farming came into vogue. "To gar sheep and kye to crunch turnips was contrary to nature, their teeth being made for grass and kail blades."³

But the new spirit made its way in spite of such hostility. Even the romantic Miss Pringle, when she gazed on the new harbour of Ardrossan, shared the enthusiasm for material progress and forgot to lament the decay of chivalry. "What a monument has the late Earl of Eglinton left there of his public spirit! It should embalm his memory in the hearts of future ages, as I doubt not but in time Ardrossan will become a grand emporium."⁴

¹His death is described in the *Annals*, c. xxi.

²*Betheral*, c. xxvi.

³*Last of the Lairds*, c. xxxv.

⁴*Ayr. Leg.*, Letter 2.

CHAPTER III

THE FORMATION OF THE CANADA COMPANY

Galt had at last established himself by the swift succession of his Scottish novels and sketches. But the annals of quiet parishes and the humours of small towns are a limited theme. Accordingly Galt turned historical novelist, and, it would seem, with no misgivings. He "often averred to me," says Gillies, "that his literary resources were far greater in extent than those of Sir Walter Scott or any other contemporary." It would have been friendly of Gillies not to have recorded this pronouncement.

Ringan Gilhaize, or The Covenanters (1823) is the first¹ and best of these historical fictions. The plan of the book is unusual and ambitious. It records the sufferings of three generations of a Covenanting family and covers the period from the martyrdom of Wishart to Killiecrankie where Claverhouse falls by Ringan's hand. *The Monastery, The Abbot* and *Old Mortality* together contain less history, and this is not to their disadvantage, for Galt's book is too much of a chronicle and too little of a romance. "The Calamities," as Jeffrey remarked, "are too numerous and too much alike." But the book has ardour and sincerity, and Galt is aided by the autobiographical form and the Ayrshire setting.

The genesis of the book was due to *Old Mortality*, which, Galt thought, treated the Covenanters with objectionable levity.² Claverhouse is drawn in accordance with the West Country traditions of his cruelty, but on the whole Galt is fair enough, more moderate than McCrie in his irritated review of *Old Mortality* and more readable than Hogg in his dull tale,

¹In his *Literary Life* (1849) Galt mentions two books, *Glenfell* and *Andrew of Padua*, which a friend reminded him that he had written. Galt tells us nothing of them, but the titles suggest historical novels. I have found no other reference to them.

²*Lit. Life*, I., 254. One of the stories (*The Covenanter*) in *The Steamboat* also speaks with disapproval of *Old Mortality*. Among Galt's papers are some lines entitled *The Covenanters* which describe his boyish meditations by a martyr's tomb near the village of Largs.

The Brownie of Bodspeck. With all its faults *Ringan Gilhaize* gives a pathetic picture of those who suffered and worshipped on the upland moors and lonely brae-sides.

In the same year appeared *The Spaewife, A Tale of the Scottish Chronicles*. Its subject, the reign and murder of James I of Scotland, had already been used by Galt in a blank verse tragedy.¹ With his usual economy of effort he drew upon the play for several scenes in the novel. The central tragic story of the King is overlaid by a diffuse and intricate plot. None of the characters are well drawn, though the Spaewife, Anniple of Dunblane, a sort of Meg Merrilies in her sudden appearances and snatches of song, has in some of her speeches the poignancy of which Galt is occasionally master. The book, according to Galt, was enjoyed by George IV and praised by Miss Edgeworth. Scott's verdict (*Journal*, July 18, 1829) is half favourable.

In *Rothelan* (1824) a story of a wicked uncle in the time of Edward III, Galt takes no pains to hide his lack of interest. He is weary of historical romance and declares his preference for "an old crone with a curious character or an odd and droll carl to all the mysterious castles and turretry of Christendom." Once or twice he escapes from his absurd world of unrealities and introduces some good Scots dialogue. The frequent digressions discuss such matters as three-volume novels and life insurance. "On the whole," said the *British Critic* (Dec., 1824), "we strongly recommend Mr. Galt to leave romances to Sir Walter."

Blackwood did not publish the historical novels. If they were offered to him he was shrewd enough to see that Galt was but a feeble rival of Scott. At any rate he and Galt seem to have quarrelled in 1823. "It is probable," wrote Maginn to Blackwood, "that in a tradesman point of view you will lose little by not publishing *Ringan Gilhaize*, for G. is writing too fast. Even Waverley himself is going it too strong on us, and he is a *leetle* better trump than Galt. However, do not let anything ever so little harsh appear against it in *Maga*. I

¹Printed in *Lit. Life*, Vol. III.

shall review it for you, if you like, praising it and extracting the greatest trash to be found in it as specimens to bear out my panegyric. G. will swallow it."¹ Galt's contemporaries saw far more clearly than he himself the limitations of his literary gift.

In 1823 Galt had settled with his family at Eskgrove House near Musselburgh. Here he met David Macbeth Moir (1798-1851) who practised medicine in Musselburgh almost his whole life. His spare time was given to literature, but his facility has injured his subsequent reputation.² He is still remembered for his *Mansie Wauch* and one or two plaintive poems. Literature proved a bond between Galt with his restless activity and Moir with his steady pursuit of his profession. Both *Rothelan* and *The Last of the Lairds* had finishing touches put to them by Moir. He describes Galt as he was in 1823, with his huge frame, vigorous health, jet-black hair and small eyes looking sharply through his spectacles.³

But Galt's activities between 1820 and 1824 were not merely those of book-maker and novelist. He was also deep in affairs. In these years began his connection with Canada which led to what he regarded as the most important work of his life.

The War of 1812 had brought high but temporary prosperity to Canada. The British troops in the colony offered a steady and convenient market for products of all kinds, and actual warfare had spared the main centres of trade and industry. The peace of 1815, however, put an end to the British government's lavish expenditure and left a set of financial problems awaiting solution.

Among these were the claims for compensation for those who had suffered directly or indirectly in the war. Severe injuries had been endured from contributions levied by Am-

¹Mrs. Oliphant, *op. cit.*, I., 390.

²Moir wrote under the pseudonym of Delta. Galt refers to him in *Lawrie Todd* as "Doctor Delta of Musselburgh, a pleasant, mild and sensible young man, somewhat overly addicted to poetry of the pale sort."

³Moir's *Memoir of Galt*, p. xxxiv.

erican invaders as well as by British troops. A commission was appointed under the sanction of the Colonial Office to examine such claims and to award compensation. No specific funds were mentioned at first from which money was to be drawn, but subsequently the proceeds of estates confiscated because of the treachery of their proprietors were directed to be used. This source, however, did not produce any great sum.¹ The commissioners awarded compensation to 2,828 persons, rejected 564 claims, and estimated the required sum of money at £229,000. This amount, however, seemed excessive to the British government, and before payments were made it was decided to establish a commission of revision under special directions to be given by Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State. The award of the new commissioners was to be final. An interval of six or seven years passed in which no payments were made, and there matters stood when Galt became concerned in the affair.²

In 1820 he was appointed London agent for the Canadian claimants; how he came to be chosen does not appear. His colleague was Edward Ellice, a prominent figure in Canadian affairs, later organizer of the Reform Bill campaign for the Whigs and secretary for war in Earl Grey's cabinet. Ellice, however, as a member of the House of Commons, preferred not to act, and the whole matter was left in Galt's hands.³

Now began the official correspondence in which Galt was to be immersed for several years. The importance of his position was not unpleasing to him. "He had parliamentary friends," says Gillies, "whom he well knew how to retain. He appeared always at his ease and independent, kept lodgings constantly in Downing Street, had great placidity and amenity

¹*Autobiog.* I., 371. Galt to Bathurst, July 8, 1824. "With the subject of the forfeited estates, I need not acquaint your Lordship that I have the misfortune to be deeply interested in what relates to them, for never was any speculative error regarding the sales of any lands more fallacious than the expected proceeds of those very estates."

²The Canadian Archives, Q. 337-1.

³Galt's *Autobiography* is dedicated to Ellice. Carlyle in 1852 described Ellice as "a wide-flowing old Canadian Scotchman, Politician, Negotiator, etc., etc., called "Bear Ellice" in society here; but rather for his oiliness than for any trace of ferocity ever seen in him."

of manners, and looked and talked very wisely." The case of his Canadian clients he urged with energy and persistence, and the Lords of the Treasury grew accustomed to his importunity. Finally, in July, 1821, they informed him "that they cannot feel themselves justified under the present circumstances and situation of the country in recommending to Parliament the grant of any public money on account of these claims." They declared that all the direct claims had been satisfied or were in course of liquidation.¹ A few days later Galt renewed the attack, and made a vigorous plea for fuller consideration of unpaid claims. All possible arguments were pressed into service. The province of Upper Canada in its defenceless condition would have been lost but for the spirited loyalty of its inhabitants. "Four well-appointed American armies, each of them superior in numerical strength to the whole force in the Province, were destroyed or defeated, and fifty pieces of cannon taken during the first campaign." The settlers had been "indefatigable in the field; they witnessed without complaint the burning of their homes, the devastation of their estates, and their families driven to extreme misery." Yet they are now to be told that no debts are to be paid except those "regularly contracted with regular officers according to regular forms." Generosity will have a good effect on the political sentiment in the province.²

The result of this appeal was a meeting held at Fife House in the early part of March, 1822, at which Lord Bexley, Lord Liverpool and Lord Bathurst met Galt and Ellice, who, though declining to act officially, lent his aid and advice. It was agreed that Upper Canada should share with the Home Government the expense of compensation to be finally awarded by the commission of revision. Galt was informed by the Treasury that it was impossible under existing circumstances to ask Parliament to vote a sum necessary for the purpose. This led to the consideration of a loan. The first proposal was for £200,000, but the sum finally fixed was £100,000, with an un-

¹Can. Arch., Q. 330.

²Can. Arch., Q. 332-2.

derstanding that if this amount should not be enough a further sum should be raised for the same purpose. The loan was to pay five per cent. interest and to be charged jointly, as to both principal and interest, to the United Kingdom and Upper Canada. Galt was to raise the money, and felt confident of finding lenders on these terms both in London and Glasgow. Sir Peregrine Maitland, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, was to appoint a new commission to examine the claims. The affair seemed well on the way to be settled, and Galt left London for Scotland.

There was, however, chance for misunderstanding. The instructions drafted in the Colonial Office provided for virtually two loans, one for £50,000 to be guaranteed by the United Kingdom, and one for £50,000 to be raised by Upper Canada on its own security. To effect a loan on these terms was out of the question; money was high and conditions in Upper Canada uncertain. Galt returned to London, and protested that under this interpretation of the arrangement he was unable to negotiate the loan.¹

So ended the proposal. The claims of the sufferers, however, were pressing, and the government decided to pay the sum of £57,412 10s., that is, a quarter of the award made by the original commissioners. This was in the first instance considered an equitable and expedient principle, but later discussion showed that injustice might be done. For example, the original commission might have awarded two claimants £1,000 each. But one award might be fair and the other unjustified. The commission of revision might uphold one and reduce the other by 75 per cent. Under the proposed arrangement both men would benefit equally, regardless of the justice of their claims. Accordingly Lord Bathurst directed a payment of five shillings in the pound to be made to every individual upon the sum which should be awarded by the new com-

¹Can. Arch., Q. 337-1, also Q. 332-2, and Q. 334, Galt to Horton, Feb. 10, 1823, declining to proceed with the transaction on the altered footing.

mission. This principle would not exhaust the whole of the £57,412 10s. owing to the reduced awards under the new commission. The government, however, was unwilling to afford less relief than had been actually promised. Maitland was therefore authorized to allow a certain percentage addition to each award under the new commission after the whole of the claims had been gone through. Here the assistance of the British government was to end unless the government of Upper Canada would apply an equal sum to satisfy the claims. "And you will also explain to the Legislature," wrote Bathurst to Maitland, "that should an additional sum be still found necessary after that payment on the part of the Government of Upper Canada, the British Government will consent to contribute towards that sum in the same proportion as the Legislature of Upper Canada agree to advance upon the exclusive security of the colony."¹

It was later agreed that a further loan of £100,000 should be raised, of which the British government would guarantee half the interest (£2,500 per annum), the province providing the remainder by levying special duties. On March 23, 1824, Galt wrote to Lord Bathurst that he had received from Upper Canada copies of resolutions passed by the Provincial parliament. Upper Canada was willing to impose new duties to raise the required £2,500, but direct taxation was impracticable, and the only method was for Upper Canada to acquiesce in the parliament of Lower Canada imposing new import duties at Quebec. The principal, of which Upper Canada was thus to provide the interest, Galt proposed should be raised in the United Kingdom. "Your Lordship is aware," he writes, "of what has taken place, seriously affecting me and my interests in the original proposal of a loan; I therefore humbly submit my hope that, as it will be obviously for the advantage of the colony to raise the money in this country, I shall be employed to effect it under the arrangement contemplated—

¹Bathurst to Maitland, Feb. 15, 1823. See *Autobiog.*, I., 361-2.

namely, on the colonial security only."¹ He was given permission to proceed with the transaction, and on April 12 he had made the preliminary arrangements.²

New difficulties, however, were in the way. The Assembly of Lower Canada, while admitting the sufferings caused by the war, declared that "the unfavourable state of commerce renders it impossible at present to bear the imposition of new taxes."³ Galt, still persistent, demanded what further plans the British government had to satisfy a debt "which justice as well as policy requires to be discharged." Horton, the Under-Secretary, in replying, reminded him of what the government had already done and of its readiness to do more *pari passu* with Upper Canada. "There," he concluded, "I understand the matter now to rest."⁴

Before the discussion of the loan had thus reached a deadlock Galt had conceived and proposed a plan which was to have far-reaching results. Robinson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and afterwards Viscount Goderich, had hinted that if Upper Canada could pay half the civil expenses of the province the government would discharge the claims of Galt's clients. In casting about for new methods of raising money in Upper Canada Galt was led to examine the natural resources of the province. It occurred to him that the sale of the Crown Reserves would provide a fund large enough to meet the claims of his constituents and also the other civil expenses of the province.

The soundness of this scheme was confirmed by Bishop Macdonnell, of Upper Canada, who visited Galt at Eskgrove

¹Can. Arch. Q. 337-1. It is pleasant to contrast with this official correspondence a letter from Galt to his boys in Scotland written at this time (March 18, 1824), "My dear little Boys, I wish very much that I was at home with you, I hope you continue good scholars and that you are kind to one another and obedient to Mamma. I shall be very glad to receive another letter from each of you, in which you will tell me what has happened since you wrote last and how far John and Tom are in the Bible."

²Can. Arch., Q. 337-1. Galt to Horton (April 12, 1824). Galt's correspondence on the loan is voluminous.

³Can. Arch., Q. 337-1, Horton to Galt (May 7, 1824) quoting the Assembly's resolution, which was passed on March 5, 1824.

⁴Can. Arch., Q. 337-1, Horton to Galt (May 13, 1824).

in December, 1823, where the latter had joined his family for a holiday from London worries.¹ On December 16 he sent letters by Macdonnell to both the Chancellor of the Exchequer and to Horton advocating his plan. "I consider it a duty," he writes, "which I owe to my constituents to leave no suggestion untried until I shall have procured them justice."² Through Galt was unconscious of having been anticipated in his scheme, a similar suggestion had been made in 1818 by petitioners in Upper Canada.³ This does not detract from his credit, for he alone had the energy and persistence to carry the plan into effect in spite of long discouraging negotiations and hostile criticism.

The disposal of public lands had for years been one of the most important and vexatious questions in all the Canadian provinces. In Upper Canada lands had been granted with a recklessness and profuseness that bore no relation to the amount of settlement and cultivation. The population in 1824 was under 150,000, and yet about 11,000,000 acres had been granted or appropriated. Till 1804 these grants had been entirely free. After that date a slight fee was charged, and in 1818 certain settlement duties were also supposed to be performed. Much of this land had been granted to various privileged persons. Nearly 3,000,000 acres had been given to United Empire Loyalists and their children, and about 1,000,000 to militiamen and discharged soldiers and sailors. Cer-

¹Alexander Macdonnell (1762-1840), first Roman Catholic Bishop of Upper Canada, emigrated to Canada with the Glengarry regiment, in the formation of which he had been instrumental.

²*Autobiog.*, I., 297-8.

³Can. Arch., Q. 340-1, Resolutions of the Township Representatives of the Midland Districts, June 15, 1818: Address to the Prince Regent: "During the war Upper Canada was exposed to the torrent of hostilities; twice did the raw battalions of militia wave the laurel of victory. . . . We are aware that taxes are heavy upon our fellow-subjects at home, and do not want aid from that source. Canada contains within itself ample means of exhonouring (sic) government from the claims of sufferers by war and it is within the fiat of your Royal Highness to remove by a single breath the evil now so justly complained of. Millions of acres of fertile land lie here, upon the credit of which, put under proper management, not only the fair claims of loyal sufferers could be satisfied, but vast sums might be raised for the improvement of the province and the eventual increase of revenue to Britain."

tain professional classes such as magistrates and barristers received grants of 1,200 acres, while 5,000 acres were granted to executive and legislative councillors, and 1,200 to each of their children. "The Province of Upper Canada," declared a Parliamentary Report in 1831, "appears to have been considered by Government as a land fund to reward meritorious servants." Of all the land thus granted probably not more than a tenth had been even occupied and a much smaller proportion reclaimed and cultivated. Much of it had fallen into the hands of speculators and land-jobbers.

The normal development of the province had been further retarded by the Clergy and Crown Reserves. The Clergy Reserves, created by the Constitutional Act of 1791 for the support of a Protestant clergy, consisted of a seventh of the land in each township. The Crown Reserves, of equal amount, had been made in order to produce a source of revenue for the Crown independent of taxation. These reserves were not merely allowed to lie waste, but their situation was such as to separate the actual settlers and to obstruct the progress of improvement.

It was this obvious failure in dealing with public lands which led the government to give Galt's scheme a hearing in the hope that persons whose financial interests were at stake would be more careful and therefore more successful in their operations. The success of the settlement on the shores of Lake Erie under Colonel Thomas Talbot (1771-1853) was a recent and encouraging precedent. Galt had now to persuade the government to a much larger delegation of its powers and to interest it in what he considered "the best and greatest colonial project ever formed."

At the request of the Colonial Office Galt drew up a plan of sale for the Crown Reserves which he submitted to Lord Bathurst (Feb. 17, 1824). With Horton's authority he sounded London capitalists on the possibility of forming a company and received a favourable answer. As a result of a meeting held at the Colonial Office the formation of a company was

proceeded with, and on April 12 a provisional committee was appointed with Galt for secretary.¹

He sent the good news to his wife the same day:

"MY DEAR BESS,—

"I have great satisfaction in letting you know that Mr. Wilmot informed me this afternoon that I am to negotiate the loan. . . . How much this may produce to me I cannot as yet know, but it will help to stop many ravenous gaps. . . . The loan, however, is the least of my objects now. I am carrying into effect the plan of selling the Crown Reserves of Land, gentlemen having come home officially so as to enable the Government to proceed according to my suggestion. The purpose on which I am employed is to raise £1,000,000, in shares, to constitute a Company, so that the period of my return is now indefinite. I shall write you more soon, but this was too good news to delay.

"Love to the dear boys,
Yours,

J. GALT.

"Say nothing of this to anybody."²

His confidence and optimism were thoroughly tested in the months which followed, months of correspondence, meetings, proposals and counter-proposals. The government hesitated to commit itself; the committee kept pressing for a definite

¹The committee consisted of John Hullett, Robert Downie, M.P., Henry Menteith, M.P., and Galt, with power to add to their numbers. See Can. Arch. Q. 339-2.

²The letter indicates Galt's financial worries. Letters to Tilloch reveal more than one cause for Galt's anxiety. Tilloch seems to have been in broken health and on the verge of bankruptcy. Galt could give him little assistance. On Feb. 2, 1824, he writes, "I am myself much troubled at present. . . . What adds to my perplexities is the obligation to pay next week a considerable bill that I was led to hope would have been renewed; all these things greatly unfit me for that constancy of application to my pen which my circumstances require. I have never felt myself so barren as of late." On Feb. 11 he writes again to Tilloch: "You have made settlements which you ought never to have done, especially ours. . . . It appears I owe you a great deal of money; I may be called on to pay that; and I ought not. When I arranged my affairs in 1820 your account should then have been closed. . . . There is only my health between my family and beggary, and I am at this time full of the most painful anxieties."

arrangement.¹ The official tone of the correspondence is occasionally relieved by Galt. "I do assure you," he writes to Horton on June 3 after an irritating interview, "that the gentlemen who have consented to lead in it are not actuated by any irrational expectations of great profits. They feel as men ambitious of character as well as of fortune should do, and they consider the views of the company, if carried into effect with energy and intelligence, calculated to confer honour on all its promoters."²

In their eagerness the committee drew up and printed a circular, setting forth the objects and prospects of the company and implying that government had agreed to the scheme and that only details remained to be settled. Such an assumption roused Horton's righteous indignation. "What possible right have you to say that the reserves are to be granted?"³ he demanded, and only consented to be soothed when Galt waited upon him with apologies for the committee's indiscretion.

The dragging on of the negotiations and the absence of his family were irksome to Galt whose thoughts often turned to Eskgrove and to the education of his sons. "I ought long ago to have answered your affectionate letters," he wrote to them on May 29, "and particularly about the pony, but I have been very busy indeed and wished to have something to tell you about when I might hope to see you or to be with you. I hope Mamma has not sold the pony, as I consider your having it a very necessary part of education, but if she has you must not repine. You are all very good and kind-hearted children and

¹Galt declares he "had discovered a visible reluctance in the Colonial Office to appear ostensibly connected with the proceeding until the bargain was concluded, by which he was much embarrassed, and obliged to act with greater delicacy than a public mercantile negotiation seemed to require" (*Autobiog.*, I., 304-5).

²Can. Arch. Q. 359-1. There are also occasional informal touches. On May 22 he writes to Horton: "Not wishing to trouble you at the office on this subject, if you are to be at the opera to-night, perhaps I may see you there. I shall be on the right hand side of the pit from the entrance."

³Can. Arch. Q. 359-1, Horton to Galt (June 18, 1824).

sensible to know that whatever I can afford for your improvement and happiness I will never withhold.

"Tom improves much in his writing, and Johnny's short letters are always to the purpose, as for Alexander, we all know that he is a perfect Solomon, and I am quite sure that King Solomon himself never knew half so much of Oxygen gas as he does. Be loving to one another and obedient to Mamma and write to me every Sunday."

At the end of June a definite proposal was submitted to Lord Bathurst, namely: "that the Company shall engage, for a period of fifteen years, to take up annually not less than 800 lots, or 160,000 acres of the crown and of the half of the clergy reserves in Upper Canada only, for which Government shall be paid £20,000 per annum certain; but for all above that quantity, which in any year the Company may find it expedient to take up, an additional sum shall be paid at the same rate (say 2s. 6d. per acre)."¹ Horton replied that far too low a value had been set upon lands which the Upper Canada legislature estimated at 4s. when uncultivated and at 20s. when cultivated. The proposal in short was "absolutely inadmissible."²

It was finally agreed that the proposed company should purchase and settle all the Crown Reserves and half the Clergy Reserves in the townships surveyed which were not sold, leased or occupied on March 1, 1824; that the value of the lands should be determined by commissioners to be sent out to Canada, a plan proposed earlier in the negotiations but discarded because of the inconvenience and delay involved; and that during a period of fifteen years the company should each year enter into possession of so much of the lands as, according to the valuation made by the commissioners, would amount to £20,000.³

¹Galt to Lord Bathurst, Can. Arch Q. 359-1, and *Autobiog.*, I., 303-4.

²Can. Arch. Q. 359-1, and *Autobiog.*, I., 363-7. Galt answered at length on July 8, maintaining that 2s. 6d. was a fair price.

³*Minutes of the Intended Arrangements between Earl Bathurst, His Majesty's Secretary of State and the Proposed Canada Company.* Imperial Blue Books on Affairs relating to Canada, Vol. 2.

By the end of July the company was at last formed, and a board of directors chosen, with Charles Bosanquet as chairman and Galt as secretary.¹ The next step was to choose five commissioners to value the lands. At the first meeting of the directors Simon McGillivray and Galt were elected to act for the company, each to receive £1,000 and expenses. The two appointed by Lord Bathurst were Lt.-Col. Francis Cockburn, who was to be senior commissioner and permanent chairman, and Sir John Harvey. The fifth, chosen by Lord Bathurst out of three candidates nominated by the company, was John Davidson, one of the Commissioners of Crown Lands in Lower Canada. Galt ranked fourth on the board, and as founder of the company felt slighted. "I am as ambitious of distinction as any man can be," he told Bathurst. To this protest Horton replied with calm indifference: "If you are the author, the adviser, the promoter and the accomplisher of the scheme of the Canada Company . . . and if you feel that thanks are due to you on that account, surely the expression of those thanks should proceed from that body of persons whose secretary you are and who ought to be grateful to you for your good deeds."²

Galt's hope in forming the company had been to provide funds for the claims of Canadian war-sufferers. This expectation was discouraged when he was curtly informed by the Colonial Office (Aug. 6, 1824), "that the money to be paid by the Canada Company was not considered by His Majesty's Government to be applicable to the relief of the sufferers by the late war with the United States."³ His further protests were unavailing, and henceforth his energies were given to the Canada Company as an independent enterprise.

On the eve of his departure for Canada with his fellow-commissioners, Galt made a proposal to the Colonial Office

¹Can. Arch. Q. 359-1, Galt to Bathurst (July 31, 1824), declaring that the company had been formed the day before.

²Can. Arch. Q. 359-1, Galt to Bathurst (Dec. 3, 1824). In an earlier letter (April 23) he had declared to Horton proudly, if not grammatically: "The plans of the company, etc., is altogether my own child."

³*Autobiog.*, I., 305.

which, though nothing came of it, is not without interest in the light of later events. He pointed out to Horton that the company, in spite of its large holdings in Upper Canada, had no legislative influence. Might it not be expedient to suggest to the Lieutenant Governor the addition to the Legislative Council "of some person intimately connected with the Canada Company, and if it should be deemed fit to make such a communication, I would further take the liberty of proposing myself as a candidate for the appointment."¹ This ambition supplies a curious comment on Galt's later declaration that he had no desire to interfere with colonial politics.

"Just off to-morrow evening for Plymouth," writes Galt on January 1, 1825. About three weeks later the commissioners were on the *Romney* man-of-war bound for New York, where they landed on February 25. On the voyage Sir John Harvey pleased Galt by reading a copy of *Ringan Gilhaize* which happened to be on board. Some of Galt's first impressions are described in a letter to his boys. "I wrote you a very long letter," he begins, "giving an account of everything that happened in our voyage to New York, and telling you of whales and Portuguese Men of War and other wonderful things. When I got that letter put on board a packet for England, I landed with some of the other gentlemen on an island

¹Can. Arch. Q. 359-1, Galt to Horton (Dec. 28, 1824). Horton answered (Jan. 6, 1825) that McGillivray had made the same request to Lord Bathurst, who had replied that such matters rested with the Lieut.-Governor. "If you wish it," Horton concludes, "I will lay your application especially before Lord Bathurst, unless you prefer writing to his Lordship yourself." See also G. 61, Horton to Maitland (Feb. 12, 1825): "Private and Confidential. Mr. Galt wishes to become a member of council in Upper Canada, and he founds his application to Lord Bathurst to assist him in this object on his having been instrumental in initiating the Canada Company, which we have admitted to be advantageous to the province. The answer is that in no case does Lord Bathurst ever interfere in the appointment of a member of council without the recommendation of the Lieutenant Governor. Now if you are of opinion that an objection would exist to this appointment, you may easily, if Mr. Galt introduces the subject to you, point out some practical inconvenience, either with relation to former promises or other claims, etc., which would prevent your recommending it. If on the other hand you have reason to anticipate no inconvenience, Lord Bathurst, on receiving your recommendation, would, I have no doubt, be disposed to confirm the appointment."

near New York called Long Island, which you will know where to find by your geography, and read of in the history of the American War. . . . We there hired a waggon to New York. The waggons in America are very light and handsome, and though not on springs are nearly as comfortable as carriages. In this waggon we were taken to a ferry which we crossed and were safe in New York in time for dinner, at which among other good things we got oysters as big as a child's hand and far better than anything of the kind I had ever tasted. New York is a very fine city about as large as Glasgow. The buildings being of brick are not so fine as those of Glasgow or Edinburgh in appearance, but it has one great edifice, the town hall, which is grander than anything either in Glasgow or Edinburgh."

On his voyage up the Hudson Galt fell in with a son of Alexander Hamilton who persuaded him to stay a few days at Albany.¹ Here he met Governor Clinton and his wife. Of the lady he thought highly both because of her resemblance to his mother and because of her admiration for the *Annals of the Parish*. On his way from Albany to Upper Canada Galt gathered information about the development of the country and the value of land. He rather prided himself on failing to see Niagara Falls. His servant reported there was nothing but a great tumbling of waters, and Galt was content with a chance view a mile or two below the cataract. "Weak imaginations easily cajoled by such things" is the complacent note in his journal.²

¹After leaving the boat the commissioners journeyed to Albany by carriage over roads on which the vehicles often sank axle-deep in mud. On the way Galt had his first sight of snake-fences. "Instead of walls and hedges," he writes to his sons, "the fields divided by zig zag layers of rough split timber which has a very bad effect." Mr. Hamilton, Galt's host at Albany, came of an Ayrshire family who lived at Grange near Irvine. Galt had been at school with two of the family.

²Galt kept a journal during his first and second visits to Canada which supplements in some points the narrative in the *Autobiography*. It is, however, very scrappy and the handwriting is at times illegible. It is amusing to compare with this verdict on the Falls a story Galt wrote for Fraser's Mag. (Aug., 1831), *The Early Missionaries, or The Discovery of the Falls of Niagara*, in which he describes them as "the most impressive spectacle of the kind to be seen on the whole earth." In *Bogle Corbet* (III., 217 f.) there is a discussion of the merits and shortcomings of the scene.

He had already begun to suffer from the ill-health which tormented him during the whole of his first visit to Canada. "Felt myself here very tired and full of aches—an all-overishness," he writes in his journal at Youngstown on the Niagara River.¹ On March 11 he embarked at Fort George² in the schooner *Industry* for York. We "had a terrible passage, a snow storm came on and the master was so drunk that, had it not been for an English sailor on board by chance, we must all have perished. I was twenty-four hours without food and all the time in very great danger and very sea-sick. The poor sailor stood at the helm till he fell from it and was several hours before he recovered. But, thank God, we got all at last safe on shore." At the Steamboat Hotel, a raw frame building fronting the harbour, he breakfasted and listened to the sounds of an Irish wake which was in full progress.³

"The general appearance of the town was such as I had expected," writes Galt in his journal, "but the place less considerable by at least a half than I was prepared to see." The capital of Upper Canada and the centre of the political and social life of the province, York was nevertheless sufficiently unimpressive in 1825, with a population of about two thousand, a low, marshy site and little commercial activity. Galt conceived an early and enduring dislike for the little place which he called "one of the vilest blue-devil haunts on the face of the earth."⁴

¹At Youngstown he chanced upon a crude universal history which described, among other things, the early struggles between Indians and emigrants. In *Fraser's Mag.* (Oct., 1830) he mentions this incident and relates a tale, *Cherokee, A Tradition of the Backwoods*, to illustrate the contents of the volume.

²The historical associations of Fort George are used for a tale by Galt in *Fraser's Mag.* (Feb., 1830).

³The hotel stood on Front Street, and on the beach below was a fish market. "The Steamboat Hotel, long known as Ulick Howard's, remarkable for the spirited delineation of a steam-packet of vast dimensions, extending the whole length of the building, just over the upper verandah of the hotel." Dr. Scadding's *Toronto of Old* (1878), p. 50. A scene in *Bogle Corbet* is laid in the hotel (vol. 3, chap. 2).

⁴*Autobiog.*, I., 334. T. A. Talbot in his *Five Years' Residence in the Canadas* (1824) thus describes the town: "The streets of York are regularly laid out, intersecting each other at right angles. Only one of them, however, is yet completely built; and in wet weather the unfinished

The commissioners began work on March 16. Colonel Cockburn and Sir John Harvey had reached York before Galt; McGillivray and Davidson soon followed. Lord Bathurst had given them written instructions, and on reaching Upper Canada they received from Sir Peregrine Maitland their commission under the great seal of the province. The sales of uncleared land for ready money in the five years preceding March 1, 1824, were to be their chief criterion in fixing prices. They were to settle an average value for each district. To enable them to gather information they were given power to summon all officers, civil and military, within the province. They were to hold meetings at least every two weeks, to draw up their report before leaving Canada and to state in it which lands in each township were to be sold to the company.

For about a month and a half the commissioners carried on their investigation, examining charts and interviewing members of the Provincial Legislature and others. Their report, signed at York on May 2, Galt's birthday, found that the company was entitled to 1,384,013 acres of Crown Reserves and 829,430 acres of Clergy Reserves. It was also the unanimous opinion of the commissioners that 3s. 6d. currency per acre was a fair price.

Galt's duties as a commissioner did not take all his time. His advocacy of the war losses in England had made his name well known in the province, and the chief personages of the little capital from Sir Peregrine Maitland down bestirred themselves to entertain the visitors. Galt's journal records various small incidents, such as the arrival on April 5 of Sir John Franklin and his officers on their way to the far northwest. During an expedition to Scarborough a few miles east of York he met David Thomson, the pioneer settler of the district, whose descendants are still to be found in the same neighbourhood. On April 23, the King's birthday, there was

streets are, if possible, muddier and dirtier than those of Kingston. The situation of the town is very unhealthy, for it stands on a piece of low marshy land, which is better calculated for a frog-pond or beaver-badow than for the residence of human beings." On April 5 Galt enters in his journal: "Yesterday the frogs were heard."

a muster of militia, and in the afternoon Galt set out for Newmarket, some thirty miles to the north, a trip which made a pleasant break in the routine at York.

One incident, trifling in itself, was the forerunner of his later political difficulties in the province. Party spirit ran high in Upper Canada. The United Empire Loyalists who had settled the province had brought with them from the United States an intense loyalty to Great Britain, but also strong traditions of self-government. Sir Peregrine Maitland, with the instincts of an aristocrat and the training of a British officer, was opposed to the growing spirit of democracy, and his advisers were drawn from a group of able and patriotic men such as Beverley Robinson and Dr. Strachan who shared his feelings. The antagonism between the popular party and the government, which in a few years was to end in armed rebellion, was in 1825 growing very acute. The men who were afterwards to be reform leaders were coming to the front; among others, M. S. Bidwell, Dr. Rolph, and William Lyon Mackenzie. There were obvious reasons why Galt should ally himself more or less closely with the government party. His own political convictions leaned to the Tory side, and he and his fellow-commissioners had everything to gain by working in harmony with Maitland. Indeed, the formation of the Canada Company would strengthen the hands of the official party by providing large revenues free from the control of the Legislative Assembly.

Probably Galt had no intention of joining either party, but his habitual impulsiveness and a slightly contemptuous attitude towards these provincial disputes, which he looked upon as "borough squabbles, at most as a puddle in a storm," led him into difficulties. Among other courtesies shown to him was the gift of a complete file of the *Colonial Advocate*, the anti-government paper founded by Mackenzie in 1824. He acknowledged the present in a letter (March 28, 1825), which was to have unfortunate consequences.

"I am very flattered by your attention" wrote Galt, "and it gives me unaffected pleasure to receive the numbers you

have taken the trouble to preserve and send me of your spirited paper. I do undoubtedly dissent from some of your sentiments, but I can appreciate the talent with which they are supported. . . . I have been too short in this country to form any opinions of its political temperament, and I have besides been the greatest part of the time confined to my room by indisposition. . . . Probably in colonies and places remote from the Supreme Government, persons are apt to consider themselves as parts of that great abstraction, Government, and to mistake attacks upon their own conduct as factious and seditious movements. On the other hand, the motions and machinery of government being in a much smaller compass, are seen more in detail than at home, and the workings of personal feeling are apt in consequence to excite the more invidiousness. To this I would partly ascribe the tone of your letter to Mr. Robinson, which displays very superior powers indeed of sarcasm, but it must occur to yourself that the value of it would not have been lessened had some of the points been sheathed in softer language. But I ought to ask for pardon for this criticism when I should be thanking you for a flattering favour. You can have no better task than the upholding the frank, courageous spirit of independence among a remote people. It is that which has made the great Island of our birth what she is, and when we compare her small natural bounds and resources with the vastness of her moral and political dominion, we may rest assured that with all the faults of her public men, her government has been one of the greatest practical wisdom that has yet withstood the test of time and the prostrations of revolution and of war."¹

¹Can. Arch. Q. 346-1. On May 1 he wrote to Mackenzie again entering the Canada Company as a regular subscriber for the *Colonial Advocate*, and asking for the paper to be sent to London. The reason for his choice was that Mackenzie's paper contained "more advertisements for the sale of land than any other paper in the province" (*Autobiog.*, I., 321). On March 30 Galt notes in his journal: "Colonial Advocate—spirited journal on the popular side, conducted by a Scotchman, W. McKenzie—the feelings of a Highlander and the industry of a Lowlander—a great deal of valuable information and personal observation may be collected from this journal. The plan of it in this respect I consider original and highly deserving of encouragement."

For the moment, however, nothing came of the matter, and the commissioners separated after a friendly farewell dinner. Cockburn, Galt and Davidson sailed from New York on the American packet *Cortes*, reaching Liverpool on June 5 after four weeks at sea. Their report was at once sent to the Colonial Office, and Galt's thoughts turned to his family in Scotland.

He was not to escape so soon, and months of discussion and dispute lay ahead. There were two causes of delay. In the first place, the Colonial Office found the report in many ways unsatisfactory, and though the company was given legal recognition, its charter was for the present withheld.¹ In the second place, the Church of England clergy in Upper Canada protested against the granting of the Clergy Reserves.

After some preliminary discussion between the Colonial Office and the company Sir Giffin Wilson was appointed to pass judgment on the report.² Galt found the months of waiting exceedingly irksome, for if the company should come to nothing many whom he had interested in the scheme would lose money. The shareholders grew daily more impatient, and he had no satisfactory explanation for them. "I really cannot afford," he wrote to Horton on October 3, "any longer to give my time to the further prosecution of a business of so little advantage." A few days later he was in Dover with Cockburn and Davidson, an anxious trio.

His state of absent-minded brooding led him into a ridiculous difficulty. While on the quay one day he walked aboard the packet, merely intending to cross the channel and return. Once at Calais, he seems to have forgotten his plan and found himself at an hotel with only a few shillings in his pocket. These were spent on a drive to Dunkirk, and he escaped from the Calais hotel by the original method of borrowing from the proprietor.

About this time Galt employed some of his enforced idleness in writing *The Omen* (1826), the autobiography of a

¹June 27, 1825, 6 Geo. iv. c. 75. An amending Act was passed in 1828.

²Can. Arch. Q. 361-1-2.

youth who grows up ignorant of his rank and parentage. Learning later that his father had been killed by his mother's lover, he goes abroad and there unwittingly falls in love with his sister. He is on the point of marrying her when his guilty mother reveals the secret.

The day was fix'd; for so the lover sigh'd,
So knelt and craved, he couldn't be denied;
When, tale most dreadful! every hope adieu,—
For the fond lover is the brother too.¹

The rest of the hero's life is made up of aimless wanderings and moody meditations. The book was reviewed in *Blackwood's* (July, 1826), by Scott, who praised the "beauty of its language" and the "truth of the descriptions." The critic in the *Scots Magazine* (April, 1826) was inclined to be satirical about this "history of a young man who is eternally pestered and reduced to a state of mind bordering on phrenzy, by supernatural intimations of impending horrors in his fate, he knows not why or wherefore." The little volume appeared anonymously and was ascribed to various people. Scott thought it was Lockhart's, and indeed it resembles *Matthew Wald* (1824) in its autobiographical form, and its wild ill-constructed plot.² If Scott had known the author we should probably have had from him some introductory remarks on the *Annals*. Like *The Majolo*, the story shows Galt's inability to write a tale of mystery and suspense.

On October 7 Sir Giffin Wilson presented his report to Horton, and a month later it was in the hands of the commission-

¹Crabbe, *The Borough*, Letter xx.

²Scott's *Journal* (Feb. 23, 1826). "Read a little volume called *The Omen*—very well written—deep and powerful language. Aut Erasmus aut Diabolus, it is Lockhart or I am strangely deceived. It is passed for Wilson's though, but Wilson has more of the falsetto of assumed sentiment, less of the depth of gloomy and powerful feeling." According to Moir the book was also ascribed to Maginn, Hamilton and Barry St. Leger. Galt was gratified by the discussion and says the secret was never discovered. In *The Last of the Lairds* (c. xxi.) he refers to "that mysterious little work, *The Omen*, in which the cabalistic sentimentality of our Northern neighbours has been so prominently brought out." The book was also noticed in the *Monthly Review* (March, 1826) which suspected the author to be a Scot.

ers. Wilson found that they had examined too little evidence, that they had made improper inferences from the evidence before them, and that the record kept of their proceedings was not in accord with their instructions. In reply to a protest from Galt, Cockburn and Davidson, Horton pointed out that no slur was cast on their character, nor was the price fixed necessarily an unfair one. But they had merely given an average price for the whole province instead of an average price for each district, and had in other important points failed to observe Lord Bathurst's instructions.¹

In the meantime the clergy had been active in bringing pressure to bear on the Colonial Office, even before the commissioners had left England.² In May, 1824, Strachan had suggested that authority to sell be granted to the corporation for managing the Clergy Reserves, of which he was chairman, rather than to the proposed Canada Company. While the commissioners were at York the Clergy Corporation drew up a petition to the Colonial Office pointing out various ill effects of the proposed grant and praying that the Reserves "may be withdrawn from the purchase contemplated by the Canada Company, and that no sale be made of such Reserves except by this Corporation with the concurrence of the Government."³

¹Can. Arch. Q. 361-2, Horton to Cockburn (Nov. 7, 1825) and Cockburn, Galt and Davidson to Horton (Nov. 10). There is a good deal of later correspondence on the matter. It was more than a business affair to Galt, who declares to Horton (Dec. 17) that he will not "permit any one whatever while there is the king and council to appeal to, and also Parliament, to exercise an irresponsible discretion ruinous to me as an individual; nor is it to be endured that the proceedings instituted against the Commissioners may be closed on the plea of official inconvenience." He implies that only evidence unfavourable to the commissioners has been taken, and ends by apologizing for any unbecoming phrases. "I have been obliged to dictate under great bodily anguish." Horton, amazed at his outburst, denies his implication. On April 20, 1826, the commissioners presented Bathurst with a long defence (Q. 368-1-2).

²Can. Arch. Q. 337-2, Strachan to Horton (May 15, 1824). After returning to York Strachan wrote to Maitland (Can. Arch. Q. 338-1, Jan. 7, 1825) pointing out that the Canada Company will take the good land in the Clergy Reserves and leave the worthless. He suggests that the clergy be represented on the commission for valuing the lands.

³Can. Arch. Q. 338-1, March 24, 1825. On May 16, 1825, Maitland sends Bathurst a copy of the agreement with the Indians.

A month later a definite alternative was proposed. Maitland arranged to purchase from the Chippawa Indians about 2,800,000 acres on the south-east shores of Lake Huron, and suggested to Bathurst that this tract should be offered to the company in place of both Crown and Clergy Reserves. He emphasized the advantages for both province and company of the new plan. A continuous tract would be easier and cheaper to manage; settlers could be given uninterrupted blocks; the opening of the land would be of great benefit to the province, and the payment by the company of even a very moderate price would relieve the British Government from the charge of the civil list of Upper Canada.

Maitland's dispatch was given to Beverley Robinson, the attorney-general of Upper Canada, who was bound for England on other business. He interviewed the Colonial Office on behalf of the clergy, and in the ensuing negotiations was in close touch with Horton and Sir Giffin Wilson. Archdeacon Mountain was also sent to London to uphold the petition against the intended sale of the Reserves.

While matters thus dragged on, Galt was summoned to Scotland in December, 1825, to his mother's bedside. A severe stroke of paralysis had affected both mind and body. She was able, however, to recognize her son, "and in the effort to express her gladness became awake, as it were, to her own situation, and wept bitterly, attempting with ineffectual babble to explain what she felt."¹ She lingered for several months and did not die till July 18, 1826. Galt's affection for his mother was deep and enduring, and the wrench of her death does not seem to have been greatly lessened by his mother's advanced age. In one of his last poems, *Irvine Water*, he tenderly recalls his early memories:

¹*Autobiog.*, I., 344-5. His mother was born in 1746. In a note to Horton (Dec. 2, 1825) Galt apparently refers to his mother's illness: "A domestic affliction and severe indisposition renders it doubtful when I may be again in London." He was there, however, by December 17. It is hard to date his trip to Irvine with his mother and sister. (*Autobiog.*, II., 231-2). Probably it occurred during a short visit to Scotland previous to December, 1825.

Well I remember all the golden prime,
When sleep and joy were night and day in time,
That to be drowsy on my mother's knee
Was almost sweeter than blest liberty.

He returned to London about the middle of December in poor health to face the weariness of official discussion and delay and the loneliness of his lodgings in the offices of the Canada Company.¹

A proposal made by the company in February, 1826, to appoint new referees was agreed to by Lord Bathurst, who, however, reserved the right to submit their decision to the Privy Council. A settlement seemed as far off as ever, and it was no wonder that Galt declared to Horton: "In point of fact, the establishing of the Canada Company undertaken in consequence of your letter of the 6th of February, 1824, has been the most vexatious, the most profitless, and the most laborious business I ever engaged in." No profits will make up for "the domestic privations which I have been obliged to endure, the reproaches I daily suffer, and the positive loss I must inevitably encounter."²

A short cut to agreement was at last found in May, 1826. Strachan, once more in England and fully authorized to negotiate on behalf of the clergy, was accepted by Bathurst as a referee to meet Galt, "with the understanding that if those parties can come to an uniform decision on the subject, his Lordship will not only not feel it his duty any longer to impede the granting of a charter, but will be happy to expedite such grant by any recommendation in his power."³

Galt and Strachan had soon reduced their differences of opinion to one point. In place of the Clergy Reserves Strachan offered the same number of acres in the Huron Tract and one

¹Writing to Cockburn (March 27, 1826), Galt complains of the expense caused by his detention in London; and admits the expense has been lessened by "the advantage I have had of occupying for myself and servant apartments belonging to the Canada Company," that is, Canada House, 13 St. Helen's Place. The company seems to have paid his claim (£125) and a later claim (£40).

²Can. Arch. Q. 368-1, Galt to Horton (Feb. 16, 1826).

³Can. Arch. Q. 369, Horton to Bosanquet (May, 1826).

hundred thousand acres over and above. Galt held out for a million acres. "In his view," wrote Galt to Horton, "I cannot concur, and neither my conviction of the justness of my own nor the circumstances which press for decision will permit me to go farther." Strachan's tone was less determined: "On the whole . . . I do not despair of coming to a final adjustment."¹ The adjustment was reached by Strachan and Bathurst yielding.²

At a meeting held at the Colonial Office on May 23 the following arrangements were made between the government and the company. In lieu of the Clergy Reserves, which at the price fixed by the commissioners would have cost £145,150 5s., the company was to receive a million acres in the Huron Tract for the same sum. A third of the purchase price was to be spent by the company in certain approved public works and improvements in the Tract; the remainder to be paid to the British government. The million acres were to be surveyed at the expense of government. The company was to be allowed sixteen years beginning July 1, 1826, for fulfilling their contract, the purchase money to be paid in annual instalments ranging from £15,000 to £20,000. In the year ending July 1, 1843, the company was either to take up all lands remaining or abandon its claim to such lands. Lord Bathurst was to take immediate steps to complete the charter.³ This arrangement did not interfere with the original agreement concerning the Crown Reserves, of which the company was to purchase 1,384,413 acres at 3s. 6d. per acre. The company was organized with a capital of £1,000,000.

Galt's own plans were for a time uncertain. On June 16 he writes to his wife: "I hope it will soon be determined whether I am to go to Canada or remain entirely here. I shall not lose a post in giving you the necessary information." In

¹Can. Arch. Q. 369, Galt to Horton (May 13, 1826) and Strachan to Horton (May 13, 1826).

²Can. Arch. Q. 369, Strachan to Bathurst (May 22, 1826), recommending that a million acres be granted.

³Can. Arch. Q. 368-1. The million acres were subsequently increased by 100,000 acres in compensation for districts rendered unfit for cultivation by swamps, lakes, or sandhills.

a letter to his boys of the same date he says: "I expect a letter from you every Sunday, that is, you are to write me on Sunday, whether Mamma has occasion to write or not, and you are also to send with your next letters a leaf out of each one's copy that I may see how you come on at school. You will also let me know in what books you are reading and all about your education.

"I do not know when I shall be in Scotland. I think you will probably all come here very soon, but when I cannot tell." A month later his sons were with him in London, apparently unaccompanied by their mother.

A royal charter incorporating the company was finally granted on August 19, 1826. A few days afterwards it was settled that Galt should go to Canada as soon as possible to select the part of the Huron Tract substituted for the Clergy Reserves.

During his final months in England Galt wrote *The Last of the Lairds* (1826). A letter to Moir (Jan. 23, 1826) shows that the book was then under way. "I am still very much harassed with the Canadian concerns. They are as yet undetermined; but I have been doing a little to the 'Laird,' and hope to be able to send a quantity of it by the next monthly parcel."¹ The shaping of the book seems to have given him great trouble. It was begun as an autobiography and then changed on Blackwood's advice, as *Sir Andrew Wylie* had been, to a regular narrative. "I have been in a state of the greatest excitement and irritation," he writes to Blackwood on March 2, "by the pressure of various public and private affairs. On Thursday last, before sending you, as I had intended, a portion of the 'Laird,' I read a part of it to a literary friend, and the effect on him made me throw the whole of it into the fire. This is the second time I have done so."² A few days later he sends two chapters to Edinburgh "after more cogitation than I ever bestowed on any subject." He

¹*Memoir*, p. xxxix.

²Mrs. Oliphant, op. cit. I., 456-7. On March 27 Galt wrote to Horton asking him "to frank the portions of a novel printing in Edinburgh".

was confident, however, that his story would be at least as graphic as anything he had previously done. Blackwood continued to feel uneasy and his criticisms finally roused Galt. "You will excuse me for remarking that I have been somewhat surprised at your letter. I know that it hath proceeded from your anxiety and friendship. The plan of the 'Laird' was finished before the writing was commenced. The object and purpose of the plan were to exhibit the actual manners which about twenty-five years ago did belong to a class of persons and their compeers in Scotland—the west of it—who are now extinct. The Laird himself is but one of the group. . . . In one word, my good friend, I should have thought by this time that you must have known that nobody can help an author with the conception of a character nor in the evolutions of a story. . . . The defects of the *Annals of the Parish* were not mine, though some of the omissions I acknowledge were judicious. *Sir Andrew Wylie*, the most original of all I have ever done, was spoiled by your interference, and the main faults of the *Entail* were also owing to my being over-persuaded. In one word, I would much rather throw the whole work a third time into the fire than begin to cobble any part of it on the suggestions of others. I do not know how it is, but I cannot proceed if I am interfered with. I know it is very silly to be so chary, but I cannot help it. It does *not* come of arrogance, but of confidence in myself. . . . Now don't be offended with my freedom."¹

Moir acted as peacemaker between author and publisher. To him Galt, on sailing for Canada, entrusted the task of putting the final touches to the story. The result of all this discussion and revision is disappointing. The Laird himself, modelled on the Laird of Smithstown whom Galt had visited with his grandmother, is well contrived and recalls Scott's Dumbiedykes. But the vulgar nabob and the heartless Mrs. Soorocks weary us by their profuseness, while the clumsy

¹Mrs. Oliphant, op. cit. I., 458-9.

loose-jointed plot is merely in the way. The best parts of the book are the quiet descriptions such as that of Auldbiggings.¹

"My present intention," Galt writes on September 4, "is to leave London on this day week for Scotland and to sail either from the Clyde or Liverpool on the 1st October."² On that day, however, he was still in London. "I leave town on Wednesday to embark. I should have been off this evening; but I have business to transact with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Tuesday, on which day he comes to town, so that I am actually running the risk of losing my passage."³ A few days later he was at sea.

¹The book was unfavourably noticed in the *Monthly Review* (Jan., 1827).

²Can. Arch. Q. 369, Galt to Horton (September 4, 1826). Two days later he sends a copy of his instructions to Horton. "Besides these instructions it is intended to give me a discretionary power, even before completing the object of my mission, to clear a number of lots and build houses on them in anticipation of settlers arriving in the spring." Horton in reply (Sept. 10) declines to accept any responsibility for the instructions, and considers them rather inadequate. The chief of them may be briefly summarized. Galt was to find out the best method of disposing of the Crown Reserves, whether by public or private sale or both, and on what terms the sales should be made. He was to obtain as full information as possible about the Huron Tract, to send the directors a description of the section he would recommend, and to endeavour to make arrangements with the provincial government for the laying out of the million acres. He was to study the methods of successful American land companies and to set down the results of his enquiries in a journal, a copy of which was to remain in Canada for the use of the company's officers; the original to go to London. He was to consider the best way of managing the company in Canada, to find fit persons for its servants, and to report progress to the directors. He was at liberty to call in assistance "with a due regard to economy," in addition to aid from the Warden of the Forests who was to be under his orders. "It is probable . . . that my mission will become executive," Galt writes to Horton (Sept. 12) "or rather be changed into that character when I shall have obtained knowledge enough of details to state to the Directors what I conceive ought to be done."

³Letter to Moir. *Memoir* p. xli.

CHAPTER IV

GALT IN CANADA, 1826-1829

"I did not feel myself entering seriously the arena of life," says Galt, "till I undertook my second mission to Canada." His previous ventures now seemed "mere skirmishing." His anticipations, however, were not entirely pleasant. A letter from Strachan headed, "Private and most confidential," which reached him a few days before sailing roused disquieting reflections.

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"I enclose three letters, one for Mrs. Strachan, one for the Attorney General and one for Major Hillier. The two last will place you, I think, on the best possible footing with these gentlemen, and I wish you to preserve it, so that I may be as you and I have been for some time. You must bear with me a little in pointing out the way. The conduct of Colonel Cockburn in leaving York and the manner in which he sent the results of your Commission to His Excellency Sir Peregrine Maitland could not be very pleasing. Other circumstances happened then and have since happened in the course of the negotiations not in themselves quite agreeable, from all which I am anxious that you should take, on going out, the proper line.

"This I feel assured you are disposed to take, but accustomed as you have been to the great political society in England, you are not sensible of the difference in a colony. In the British Parliament opposition is general not personal. In a colony such as ours opposition is commonly personal and bitter, though in the end, if met with firmness, altogether nugatory.

"Now I wish you to lay down as a principle never to be departed from that it is the interest of the Canada Company to support the Colonial authorities and never to take a side against them. Let me also advise you never to meddle in

Colonial politics, for one side or other you must by so doing offend, and so great and complicated are your interests that the determined enmity of any party would be productive of great loss.

"On the whole, do not hesitate a moment in making the Attorney General and Major Hillier your advisers in all your plans, and confide in none else.

"Converse with the Major oftener than write, and when to write is necessary prepare the draft with him before it is sent in officially.

"Sir Peregrine is extremely nice in his writing, I might almost say fastidious, and therefore everything ought to be well weighed.

"I can assure you the more confidence you put in those two gentlemen the better it will be for you, and the more satisfaction you will have in your mission. They are men in whose integrity you may rely upon to the utmost and of the first talents.

"I am sure you will take this letter in good part and see in it an anxiety to serve you,—the machine you have to conduct is complicated, and though your abilities are of a superior order I foresee that you will frequently require the assistance of me and my friends. But in order to receive that assistance, and indeed in order to enable us to give it, you must confide in us and in us only."¹

A meeker man than Galt might have been nettled by this mixture of condescension and threatening. Strachan, while advising Galt to take no side in provincial politics, obviously wished to attach him to the little group of able but undemocratic supporters of Maitland. The impression left on Galt was that he was regarded in Upper Canada with a distrust which Strachan wished to counteract by his friendly but irritating counsel. He neither answered nor destroyed the letter, but determined to await developments. His suspicions were strengthened by some parting words of caution from Horton.

¹Can. Arch. Q. 346-1. Major Hillier was Maitland's secretary.

Such apprehensions did not increase the pleasure of the voyage. By the middle of November he was in New York.¹ His journal notes the "lathy appearance of the inhabitants, sallow complexion, singular longitude of nose and chin." He stayed about ten days in the city, met various people of note, and made enquiries how emigrants might be sent on to Canada without delay and unnecessary expense.

On his way to York he obeyed his instructions by studying the methods of the Pulteney and the Holland land companies. He was impressed as on his previous journey by the initiative and shrewdness of the Americans as compared with the more sluggish Canadians. "The character of the Canadian mind is very speculative, and but little practical. The inhabitants talk wisely and ingeniously, but they seem to have no active power combined with that of volition. They are the reverse of the Americans who have but little theory, but are alive and alert to imitate any new mode of pursuing profit. . . . The Americans work their salt mines. The Canadians talk of their salt springs."² The same contrast struck Lord Durham a dozen years later.

Galt arrived in York on December 12, and took up his old dismal quarters in the Steamboat Hotel. His apprehensions as to his reception soon proved to be well founded.

Various circumstances combined to attach suspicion to Galt in the eyes of Maitland and his advisers. Before leaving England he had shown some courtesy to Dr. Rolph, a leader of the Reform party in Upper Canada, and therefore obnoxious to the Lieutenant Governor. Rolph had come to London to oppose a bill for the naturalization of Americans, and through Galt obtained a promise from the Colonial Office

¹The first entry in his journal referring to New York is dated November 16. The Upper Canada paper, the *U. E. Loyalist*, states (Dec. 2, 1826), "Mr. Galt, secretary to the Canada Company, has arrived in the ship *Brighton* from London."

²Galt's Journal, April 8, 1825. Galt contributed to *The Canadas* (1832), a compilation for the use of emigrants by Andrew Picken, a "summary relative to the Land Speculations by which the Genessee country and Western Territory of New York were settled." *Lawrie Todd* also deals with the early development of this country.

that certain provisions should be modified. He returned to Canada apparently satisfied. Galt, however, found him at York about to bring in an independent measure. On the day of his arrival, while delivering letters to Maitland, Galt complained of Rolph's conduct and spoke of petitioning the House of Assembly against his bill on the ground that anything which unsettled conditions in the province was injurious to the interests of the Canada Company. Impulsive as usual, he sought out Rolph and reproached him with his shiftiness, and also mentioned to Robinson and Hillier his intention of petitioning. This readiness to interfere in political matters did not commend itself to Maitland who wrote to Galt next day, pointing out that his proper course was to state his objections and leave the matter in the Governor's hands. He advised Galt to avoid communication with opposition members. "You must perceive," he concluded, "how solicitous I am to avoid all occasion of difficulty, and to remove every obstacle to the most candid communication, when I have availed myself of the first occasion thus fully to express my sentiments upon a subject of no common delicacy, and I think it right to go a step further, and to observe that it is only by your abstaining altogether from mixing in local politics, that a good understanding can be insured; for I must frankly confess that the impressions I have received from past occurrences would be very apt to dispose me to put an unfavourable construction upon such interference."¹

In replying, Galt declared that he had no disposition to meddle with politics, and that he was at a loss to know what past occurrences could have offended the Governor. After another exchange of letters Maitland gave an explanation of his reference to Galt's previous conduct. He first blamed Galt for having taken, while in York as a commissioner, too active

¹*Autobiog.*, II., 11. Among the past occurrences Maitland no doubt remembered Galt's ambition to become a member of the Legislative Council. Galt himself always thought that the *Quarterly* review of his *Voyages and Travels* told against him in Canada. "I have now reason to believe that those who abused the ear of Sir Peregrine Maitland to my prejudice were misled respecting my principles by what was said of me in the article respecting my *Voyages and Travels*." (*Lit. Life*, I., 91.)

an interest in public matters not connected with his enquiry. He next charged him with having misrepresented the Provincial Government in his correspondence with the Colonial Office. The third indictment was of a more definite sort. During the interval between Galt's first and second visits to Canada the personalities in the *Colonial Advocate* had become so unrestrained that Mackenzie's office had been raided and his printing press wrecked. In a suit for damages he had produced in his defence the two letters written to him by Galt. On landing in New York Galt had heard of this, and at Niagara (Dec. 10, 1826) he addressed an indignant protest to Mackenzie:

"SIR,—

"On my arrival in America I heard with extreme surprise that you had produced in a late action for damages a letter from me, commending the manner in which you conduct the *Colonial Advocate*.

"You had, sir, the courtesy, when I was last in the province to send me a file of your paper, and I returned of course a civil note for the present—the contents of that note I do not recollect, but as my political sentiments differ from yours, I cannot conceive how any expression of mine even complimentary to your talents; could imply that I approved of the style and temper of the *Colonial Advocate*.

"As I wish my political opinions not to be misunderstood, I should be obliged to you to publish this, together with the letter produced in court."¹

The letters which Mackenzie had used had left upon Maitland's mind an exaggerated and distorted impression. He found in them "warm commendations of the talent displayed in attacks upon my government, and . . . intimations . . . as to the manner in which attacks might be made with greater caution and equal effect."² Maitland closed the correspondence by declaring that he would allow no past in-

¹Can. Arch. Q. 346-1.

²*Autobiog.*, II., 20. Galt sent a copy of the whole correspondence to Horton.

cidents to prejudice him against Galt and that he would endeavour to aid the Canada Company in every way.

This was not a very encouraging beginning. Having seen the result of his previous unsuspecting conduct, Galt in the future held himself reserved and aloof.¹ He turned with relief to his work, and after registering the company's charter at York, proceeded to Lower Canada for the same purpose.²

In the beginning of January he went to Montreal and then to Quebec, where the provincial Parliament was in session. Here he once again interested himself in the claims of Canadian war-sufferers, and presented a fruitless petition to the House of Assembly "with all the blandishments in his power."³

The month at Quebec was the happiest Galt spent in Canada. It brightened, he said, "the sombre hue of a varied life in which the shade has ever most prevailed." The escape from the narrow political world of little York to a city of nearly 40,000 was in itself pleasant. So also was the change from the suspicions and stiffness of Maitland to the frankness and courtesy of Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General. In some lines written a short time before his death Galt recalled how Dalhousie's kind welcome had encouraged him to face the difficulties of his position.

Cheer'd by the shelter then bestow'd,
I dar'd a dark and drifted road.

The worth of gift or grant, my Lord,
Can ne'er in sterling well be known:
The value of the heart'ning word
Is in the kindness of the tone.

¹This reserve also led to misunderstandings. "I have just received a biographical sketch of me published at York drawn up in a friendly spirit, but it speaks of me as playing 'Captain Grand,' and looking down on the inhabitants of Upper Canada. The fact is, I never thought about them, unless to notice some ludicrous peculiarity of individuals." This self-contradictory note is in the *Autobiography*, II., 51.

²Can. Arch. Q. 369. Galt writes to the company directors (Dec. 28) with more tact than truth that he has every reason to be satisfied with the Provincial Government. "Business presses upon me here," he adds, "and I am in no condition yet to take it up regularly." He had already received 130 applications for land.

³Can. Arch. Q. 371, Galt to Horton (Feb. 5, 1827).

Galt was accompanied on his trip to Quebec by a notable member of his staff. William Dunlop (1792-1848) had first come to Canada as an assistant surgeon during the War of 1812, and had become known for his genial eccentricities and reckless bravery. Returning to England at the close of war, he soon afterwards went to India where his skill in big-game hunting won him the nickname "Tiger." Later he was intimate with the Blackwood group in Edinburgh, and wrote an account of his Indian experiences for "Maga." In 1826, when the Canada Company was formed, Dunlop was leading a varied life in London, turning his hand to journalism of all kinds. He was appointed Warden of the Forests for the company and was sent out ahead of Galt to begin surveying. Six feet three in height, with a mass of red hair, a "Titanic bray" of a laugh, and an endless store of anecdotes, Dunlop was a tempting subject for caricature. A drawing by Maclise in *Fraser's Magazine* shows him seated, a tiger's head looking down at him from the wall and on the table behind him a tumbler and two decanters—an indication of the failing which, though finally overcome, shortened his life. He and Galt made a conspicuous pair of Scots.¹

Both Galt and Dunlop took part in amateur theatricals contrived by the Quebec garrison. With help from others Galt wrote a farce, *Visitors, or a Trip to Quebec*, in which well known local characters were ridiculed; among them, Philemon Wright, the famous pioneer of Hull township, who later served as model for Mr. Hoskins in *Lawrie Todd*. Dunlop acted the part of a Highland chieftain with immense success. The skit was apparently never printed. About a year

¹*Fraser's Mag.* (July, 1832), reviews Dunlop's *Statistical Sketches of Upper Canada, for the use of Emigrants, by a Backwoodsman* (1832), an amusing and interesting book. The article also gives a vivid sketch of Dunlop's career. See also *Blackwood's Mag.* (Oct., 1832). Strickland's *Twenty-Seven Years in Canada West* (1853) tells many anecdotes about Dunlop, and he is also frequently mentioned in MacTaggart's *Three Years in Canada* (1829). The Misses Lizars' book, *In the Days of the Canada Company* (1896), has a full and racy account of Dunlop, his friends, his hospitality, his liquor-stand holding a dozen bottles christened the "Twelve Apostles," and his famous will, the humour of which reminds one of the broader fun in Galt's novels.

later while in New York Galt wrote another farce, *An Aunt in Virginia*, which appeared in narrative form in Blackwood's (Jan. and Feb., 1833) under the title *Scotch and Yankees*.

A letter to Moir tells of another incident during his stay at Quebec. "It is the practice here for the country people on the other side of the St. Lawrence to cross in canoes, even while the ice is hurling up and down on the tide. I was induced, without duly considering the risk, to accompany a friend who has a country seat on the other side: we had eight rowers in the boat, or rather canoe—we laid ourselves down in the bottom, and were launched like a shuttle in the loom down 'the glass brae' of the shore. The boatman then began to sing their hum-drum songs; away we went—when a vast sheet, some acres wide, of ice caught us; in a moment out leapt the men—drew the boat on the ice—hailed us over, and launched us in the water on the other side—in they were again, and again at their paddling and singing. This was repeated three times before we landed. In the evening, when we returned, the ebb was running at the rate of five or six miles an hour, and we were caught in a floe. . . . The pieces surrounded us, the boatman could get no footing on them; fortunately I never thought of the ice that we were in being in motion, but imagined that what was fixed was moving up. The sun was in the verge of the horizon, and the thermometer at more than 10 below zero, and we were drifting away below the city. We were at least five miles out of our course before I suspected our danger—for it is no joke to be frozen to death; at last the ice had the humanity to separate, and we got into clear water under a beautiful cliff of ice, some twenty or thirty feet high, crowned on the top with sparkling stars. The effect of the setting sun on the icicles was more brilliant than you can imagine. It was just dark when we landed."¹

Signs of spring were visible in Upper Canada when he returned early in March to enter seriously upon his duties. His mission had originally been merely one of enquiry and was to be completed in eight months. He now requested that

¹*Memoir*, pp. xlii-xliii.

the time be extended and that he be made superintendent of the company, in order that he might deal with the applications for land which were coming in. The directors assented, and Galt became superintendent with a salary of £1,611 2s. 2d., including allowances. He was left to pick up what clerks he could, and had no accountant till the middle of 1828.

He set himself to the toilsome but congenial task of working out a system for the disposal of lands based on the principles followed by the Pulteney and Holland companies. Plans for settlement were made and the site for a town chosen, but the year was still too young for outdoor operations. Galt accordingly paid a short visit to New York, where he appointed J. C. Buchanan agent for the company.¹ The trip was rendered interesting and almost perilous by a sudden thaw. "The scene which the valley of the Mohawk presented cannot be described. It was an elegant extract from the universal deluge; for leagues and miles the whole country was up to the neck in water, and countless cataracts were pouring from all the hills—not certainly quite so vast as Niagara, but many of them would not have shamed the Cora of the Clyde at Lammas flood. What have the Yanky poets to do with *translating* European descriptions? There was more originality of poetry in the business of that morning than in all the rhyme they have yet published."²

The founding of Guelph is the most vivid incident of Galt's work in Canada. The name was in honour of the royal family, and the date set for the start of operations was St. George's Day, April 23. "This was not without design; I was well aware of the boding effect of a little solemnity on the minds of

¹Can. Arch. Q. 371, Galt to Horton (New York, April 7, 1827), says he has made arrangement for the transportation to Canada of emigrants landing in New York. He suggests a scheme for bringing out servants and would like to see "the establishment of an aristocracy" and the discouragement of the "singular growth of Americanism." He issued a prospectus at New York setting forth the advantages of the company. No encouragement was to be given to speculators, but only to sober and industrious settlers with families.

²Galt to Moir (Aug. 1, 1827). *Memoir*, xlvii.

most men, and especially of the unlettered, such as the first class of settlers were likely to be, at eras which betokened destiny, like the launching of a vessel, or the birth of an enterprise, of which a horoscope might be cast.”¹

On April 22 he met Dunlop at a little town on the Grand river about eighteen miles from the proposed site of Guelph. The settlement, originally called Shade’s Mills, was now rechristened by its founder, William Dickson, a Scottish pioneer who had come to Canada in 1792. Henceforth the place was called Galt. The next morning the party set out. Galt and Dunlop soon lost their way in the woods, and wandered up and down till they found a hut inhabited by a Dutch shoemaker who set them on the right path. “With his assistance we reached the skirts of the wild to which we were going, and were informed in the cabin of a squatter that all our men had gone forward. By this time it began to rain, but undeterred by that circumstance, we resumed our journey in the pathless wood. About sunset, dripping wet, we arrived near the spot we were in quest of, a shanty, which an Indian who had committed murder had raised as a refuge for himself. . . . We found the men, under the orders of Mr. Prior, whom I had employed for the Company, kindling a roaring fire, and after endeavouring to dry ourselves, and having recourse to the store-basket, I proposed to go to the spot chosen for the town.” The little party set forward, Dunlop having exchanged his wet clothes for two blankets, one worn as toga and one as kilt.

“It was consisent with my plan to invest our ceremony with a little mystery. . . . So intimating that the main body of the men were not to come, we walked to the brow of the neighbouring rising ground, and Mr. Prior having shewn the site selected for the town, a large maple tree was chosen, on which, taking an axe from one of the woodmen, I struck the first stroke. To me at least the moment was impressive—and the silence of the woods, that echoed to the sound, was as the sigh of the solemn genius of the wilderness departing for ever.

¹*Autobiog.*, II., 54.

"The doctor followed me, then, if I recollect correctly, Mr. Prior and the woodmen finished the work. The tree fell with a crash of accumulating thunder, as if ancient Nature were alarmed at the entrance of social man into her inmost solitudes with his sorrows, his follies and his crime." The solemnity was dispelled by Dunlop who pulled out a flask and pledged the future city in Canadian whisky.¹

Parts of the famous maple were preserved by the early settlers as souvenirs. In 1828 by Galt's orders the stump was fenced round by Major Strickland, and when the top was levelled and fitted with a sun dial it served as town clock for many years. About 1843 it gradually fell into decay, and its site is now covered by the embankment at the south-west end of the bridge spanning the river, which was christened by Galt, the Speed. A story of doubtful authority says that when the tree was felled Prior laid his hand on the stump, and indicated the future street-plan by spreading his fingers. Whether this is legend or fact, the streets radiate like the sticks of a fan from this point.²

Chopping, clearing and building were the first tasks in the new settlement. With the intention of attracting settlers Galt included a schoolhouse among the first structures undertaken. Storehouses and sheds for the Company were also essential. Galt's house, completed in the following spring, and called *The Priory* after Prior who had charge of the operations at Guelph, still stands.

During the progress of this work Galt returned to York, where he was soon at odds once more with Maitland. The only road between York and Guelph at that time was a circuitous one passing through Dundas and Galt. A storehouse at the head of Lake Ontario would be in a more central posi-

¹*Autobiog.*, II., 56 ff. Compare the founding of Judville in *Lawrie Todd*. "When we reached what was destined to be the centre of the town, the axemen or choppers cleared the brush or underwood from around a large tree, and . . . the old gentleman took an axe and struck the first stroke. . . . I struck the second, and so it went round, until the tree fell with a sound like thunder, banishing the loneliness and silence of the woods for ever."

²*Annals of the Town of Guelph*, by C. Acton Burrows (1877).

tion for the company's lands. Supplies could be sent to such settlements as Guelph, and payments in produce could be received there from intending purchasers. Galt therefore resolved to apply for a grant of land on the shores of Burlington Bay.¹

His official application was accompanied by a letter to Major Hillier (May 3, 1827) which had unfortunate results. The chief cause of offense was one sentence: "I should be exceedingly glad to have it in my power to say that the three or four acres would be *given* to the Company, for I do assure you that various circumstances have made many connected with the Company not at all satisfied with the opposition which it is conceived has been shewn towards the general interests of the incorporation, as it now is, from influential persons in this province." He admitted that he himself had seen no cause for such dissatisfaction, but at the same time warned the government that any unfavourable action on their part would be thwarted by the political power of the directors in England. In conclusion, he touched upon his own position, and declared he had been the victim of "falsehoods, the invention of which only served to prove the ignorance of the inventors as to the character of an individual, who from his very boyhood has neither been obscure nor in his sentiments equivocal."²

This tone of defiance and threatening was scarcely appropriate when asking a favour. Hillier replied (May 14) that

¹The place is described by Galt in *The Hurons—A Canadian Tale*, (*Fraser's Mag.*, Feb., 1830). "At the head of Lake Ontario a long, narrow strip of land separates its clear waters from a smaller expanse, generally known by the name of Burlington Bay. Along the northern part of the beach, as this strip is called, close under the residence of Brant, the Mohawk chieftain, a number of detached, picturesque trees grow upon the sand, curiously festooned with gigantic vines interwoven among their branches; and in the ground beneath, at short intervals, are many square artificial hollows, the remains of a fortified camp of a party of the Huron Indians who resisted the original invasion of their hunting grounds, when the French first attempted to establish military posts in that remote wilderness." See also MacTaggart, *Three Years in Canada*, I., 303. "Burlington Bay with the adjoining country is the loveliest place in civilized Canada." For Brant, see Galt's account of their former meeting in London, *Autobiog.*, I., 283f.

²Can. Arch. Q. 344-1. Also *Autobiog.*, II., 66-68.

the application would be laid before the Executive Council, that the government felt most friendly towards the company, and that it would be well if all their future correspondence were submitted to the Colonial Office. In approving of this suggestion, Galt could not help referring again to the "invidious jealousy with which he is watched in his visits, his correspondence, and conversation." The grant was made on June 8, but even in his letter of thanks Galt could not keep away from his own concerns. "Feeling deeply and resenting strongly the imputation of being a favourer of discontent and a meddler (*sic*) in politics, Mr. G. will not allow any repetition of the charge even by hypothetical construction to pass unnoticed."¹

That Maitland was nettled by this rough-tongued, irritable Scot is not surprising. We may believe his declaration to Bathurst that, while anxious to work smoothly with the company he found the superintendent very difficult.

In the meantime Galt was glad to obtain his grant, and apparently considered the incident closed. His next task was to make himself familiar with the Huron Tract. Dunlop, assisted by John Brant, the Mohawk chief, and others, explored and surveyed this wilderness. Their hardships were extreme, and the story went the round of the American papers at one time that they had all been murdered by Indians. Galt set out from York probably early in June, and travelled by Yonge Street to Newmarket. They descended the Holland river and crossed Lake Simcoe "with singing boatmen—a race fast disappearing. The passage of that lake is exceedingly beautiful, but not picturesque. We met in the twilight of the dawn with a canoe full of Indian children, piloted by a negro. They were gliding over the glassy water between us

¹Can. Arch. Q. 346-1, Galt to Hillier (June 11, 1827). Also Q. 371, Galt to Horton (June 2, 1827): "I have no cause to be dissatisfied in my business with the local authorities; but my own situation is not an agreeable one, for, to use a conciliatory phrase of Sir P. Maitland, there is 'a ready and credulous ear' open to my disadvantage. Before my arrival in Little York I had been vain enough to believe that my political principles were pretty well known, and that I had always been a faithful and consistent subject."

and the waning, like imps and their leader, as silent and as solemn as spirits."¹

By a narrow forest track they crossed overland to Penetanguishene, where the Admiralty had placed a gun-boat, the *Bee*, at their disposal. After some delay due to unfavourable winds, they reached Cabot's Head, "a woody stretch of land not very lofty, lying calm in the sunshine of a still afternoon." The next day they sighted a cottage in a small clearing, and on approaching were met by a canoe filled with "a strange combination of Indians, velvetens and whiskers, and discovered within the roots of the red hair the living features of the Doctor."²

The place had been chosen by Dunlop as the site of the future town of Goderich, named in honour of the Secretary of State.³ Their landing was celebrated by a bottle of champagne which Dunlop had hoarded for the occasion. The morrow was spent in exploring the river, later renamed the Maitland, and its bordering meadows, which recalled quiet English landscapes. They tried to reach Detroit in time for the 4th of July celebrations, but failed by a few hours. Galt was, however, gratified by his reception. "The Americans," he wrote to Moir, "were very civil to us at Detroit. When we entered the theatre one of the players recognized me, and the orchestra forthwith were instructed to play a Scotch air." At Niagara Falls they met Captain Basil Hall, the friend of Scott.

After a short stay at York he went on to inspect the work at Guelph. Here he was visited by Bishop Macdonnell who selected the lofty site on which the Catholic church now stands. Some Edinburgh friends also came, with whom he rode to Galt and voyaged down the Grand river in a scow, an experience afterwards utilized in *Lawrie Todd*. He returned to York by way of Brantford and "the pretty breezy town of Ancaster on the hill."

¹Galt to Moir, (Aug. 1, 1827), *Memoir*, xlvii.

²*Autobiog.*, II., 79.

³The name had been intended for Guelph by the directors who were not too pleased with Galt for upsetting their plan.

About this time Galt settled himself at Burlington in order to be nearer Guelph, the scene of the company's chief activities. But he was no more secure from vexation here than at York. On July 29 trouble arrived in the form of a body of emigrants from New York who had come to make arrangements for the reception of themselves and their companions who were following. These unfortunate people had left England in 1825 for La Guayra, Venezuela. There they were disappointed in the climate, the soil, and the political conditions. An appeal for help brought out a British frigate under the command of Sir Peregrine Maitland's brother who offered to transport them to Canada. At New York they were received by Buchanan, who was vice-consul as well as agent for the Canada Company, and sent by him to Galt. Altogether they numbered 135, of whom 58 were under 13 years of age.

Their destitution demanded prompt action. Galt decided to aid them and the company by settling them at Guelph. The day after their arrival he wrote to Horton: "I have ordered a house to be constructed for their reception, the receiving house of the company being occupied by eighteen families and all the other houses yet habitable being full." Such as were able-bodied were to be set to work. On the same day he wrote to Hillier, enclosing his letter to Horton.¹

To provide accommodation for the La Guayrians money was needed, and Galt had no funds. His solution of the difficulty proved a fruitful source of trouble. A payment to the Government from the company was just due. "I have therefore resolved," he told Horton, "to withhold £1,000 from that payment for which I will account to the company, and it can afterwards be settled with Government either in London or in

¹Can. Arch. Q. 371, Galt to Horton (July 30, 1827), and Q. 344-2, Galt to Hillier (same date). Galt says he waited some time for Maitland's orders, but received no answer from Hillier. It seems clear, however, from his letter to Horton that he formed and followed a definite plan of his own almost immediately. After Galt's resignation the emigrants received no further aid from the company and their settlement was broken up. The last of them, David Stirton, died in 1908. (See *The Last of the La Guayrians*, by C. C. James, in the Ontario Historical Society's *Publications*, vol. xv.)

this country, unless the Lieutenant Governor sees fit to relieve me from the consequences of this unforeseen emergency."¹

Galt's action pleased nobody. The Provincial Government, the Colonial Office, the company directors, and even the emigrants themselves all had objections. Maitland wrote to the Colonial Secretary expressing strong disapproval; the directors fell in line with the Colonial Office, and Galt was ordered to pay the £1,000 which he had withheld.²

There had also been minor causes of friction. Galt had appointed August 12 as a public holiday in Guelph in honour

¹Can. Arch. Q. 371, Galt to Horton (July 30, 1827). On August 21 he writes to Horton that nine of the families have reached Guelph and that eleven more are on the way. Fifty acres have been given to each family at the general price fixed for Guelph lands (\$2.00 per acre). The emigrants are working off the purchase price in road-making, etc. The children have been put to school. On September 22 he writes that more have arrived and have received the same treatment. Galt planned to form a model settlement with the La Guayrians to extend four miles along the Elora road.

²There is a great deal of correspondence on the La Guayrians. See Can. Arch. Q. 344-2, Maitland to Goderich (Oct. 17, 1827); Q. 371, Galt to Horton (Nov. 8, 1827), defends his action on three grounds: first, the British consul in New York had sent the emigrants to Guelph and had paid their travelling expenses; second, they had reached Galt in a destitute condition, and when he was 40 miles away from York and unable to consult Maitland; third, that he at once informed the Provincial Government of what he had done. Q. 371, A. Stanley to Maitland (Nov. 7, 1827), authorizing him to afford emigrants indispensable relief, "letting it be distinctly understood that you disavow any claim which Mr. Galt may feel disposed to make in consideration of any expense hitherto incurred on their account." Much of the discussion was as to whether Buchanan in forwarding the emigrants had acted as British consul or agent for the Canada Company. Four of the settlers petitioned against the company and asked for a grant of land from the Crown. This seemed to Galt the basest ingratitude. "I cannot but consider it," he wrote to Hillier (Q. 346-2, Dec. 26, 1827), "as belonging to that singular series of coincidences which from the moment I first had the misfortune to set my foot in this province has embittered my life. Only imperative motives of humanity, which even crime can command, will prevent me after 12 o'clock to-morrow from giving orders to turn these absurd persons adrift in the woods." At the beginning of 1827 Maitland sent two commissioners to question the emigrants as to their expectations in coming to Canada. Finally the matter was laid before the Executive Council which decided (Jan. 29, 1828) that the emigrants had reached New York under government auspices, that their expenses to Guelph had been paid by government, but that Buchanan in furnishing them with Canada Company way-tickets had acted as company agent and not as consul, that Galt had no authority to interfere with the disposal of government settlers and that his defence was inadequate.

of the King's birthday, and the formation of the Canada Company. An ox was roasted whole and carried into the market houses then in course of erection. Here some two hundred guests, whose enthusiasm was stimulated by the passing of pails of whisky, listened to speeches by Galt, Dunlop, Prior and others. Galt himself proposed Maitland's health and spoke of his willingness to aid the company. But ill-natured rumour declared that the Governor's name had been omitted from the toast-list. From trivial and from serious causes the suspicion attached to Galt continued to grow.¹

Matters were clearly reaching a crisis, and Galt debated whether he would hand in his resignation. He had, however, already written to his family to join him in Canada. Another circumstance also dissuaded him and gave him hopes of pleasanter relations with the Lieutenant Governor. He was informed by Colonel Coffin, the head of the militia department, that Maitland wished to give him the command of a regiment. So pleased was Galt that he resolved to show a little more cordiality to the inhabitants of York, and began to make arrangements for a fancy-dress ball.

In the midst of his preparations came a rebuke from the directors for the correspondence with Maitland about Burlington Beach. They enclosed a resolution: "That the Court disapproves the tone as well as the substance of these letters; they being alike unauthorized by any proceeding of this Court, and that the Directors disclaim the opinions ascribed by Mr. Galt to 'many connected with the Canada Company.'" While blaming Galt for his dealings with the Provincial Govern-

¹Guelph, though only four months old, already boasted three taverns filled with boarders, and a regular mail-coach twice a week. There was even talk of starting a newspaper. A circular issued in London by the company (Feb. 1, 1828) gives a glowing picture of the settlement. Roads from adjoining townships have been opened; sites for churches and burying grounds are given free to all denominations; about 200 town lots and 16,000 acres have been engaged, and 76 houses built or in course of erection; a saw-mill, and brick-kiln are in operation, and a grist-mill is partially completed; a market-house, several stores, and a permanent schoolhouse have been founded. The circular expresses a needless fear that with the clearing of the forests the climate will become so mild and the snow fall so slight as to ruin the winter roads.

ment, the directors expressed undiminished confidence in his zeal on behalf of the company. The incident shows, among other things, the disadvantage of absentee directors who tried to manage important and intricate concerns from the distance of St. Helen's Place. The reproof was as surprising to Galt as it was gratifying to Maitland.¹

Galt's first step was to seek an interview with Maitland, "for," as he wrote to Hillier, "it is no longer becoming the justice due to myself nor prudent under the hazard of probably impending humiliation that evident misunderstanding should be perpetuated and error allowed to grow up into grievance."² Maitland received him with guarded official manner and admitted that he had complained to the Colonial Office. Galt's next step was to send his resignation to the chairman of the directors, leaving him at liberty to present it to the board or not. He learned subsequently that Bosanquet withheld it.

He then set about drawing up a formal explanation and defence of his relations with the Provincial Government. To strengthen his case he determined to produce the letter he had received from Strachan before leaving England. It is true, he wrote to Strachan, that the letter "is marked 'private and most confidential,' but as it relates to public men and a public trust, I feel myself constrained to make such use of it as I may find necessary."³ Strachan replied that he had no recollection of

¹Can. Arch. Q. 371, Galt to Huskisson (Dec. 24, 1827), enclosing his answer to the directors, whose dispatches "have so much surprised me that I am obliged, with respect to my correspondence with the Lieut. Governor, to demand that the Resolutions be rescinded as I was prepared with the fullest explanation of that subject." Q. 344-2, Maitland to Huskisson, (Dec. 29, 1827), thanking him for bringing pressure to bear on the directors "in order to check Mr. Galt's very improper and offensive correspondence with this Government. I regret to add that I have by me many very unnecessary letters from that gentleman which I shall not fail to transmit."

²Can. Arch. Q. 346-1, Galt to Hillier (Dec. 20, 1827).

³Can. Arch. Q. 346-1, Galt to Strachan (Dec. 21, 1827); Strachan to Galt (Dec. 22); Strachan to Galt (Dec. 24). Galt sent a collection of letters illustrating his relations with Maitland to Robert Stanton, the Government printer at York, who declined (Dec. 21) to print them without authority from the Government. On Dec. 27 Galt applied for permission to have his documents printed by Stanton, and was told it could not be done without the sanction of the Secretary of State.

the letter, demanded a copy and protested against Galt's intention as "treacherous and ungentlemanly." These hard words did not dissuade Galt, and finally Strachan declared he was prepared to face any blame arising from the production of the letter, and that he had written it because he had seen in Galt "a restless disposition and an overweening idea of the power and importance of your office, united with a jealous suspicion."

Placed in this delicate position, Strachan decided to act first. He sent Maitland a copy of the letter and an account of his dealings with Galt. He had observed that Galt "even when he seemed to have no motive for discarding courtesy was often disagreeable and apparently unjust and disingenuous in his correspondence. I thought I should more effectually guard him against this source of difficulty by laying strong stress upon a disposition in your Excellency not to suffer in this respect a departure from propriety even in form, than by grounding my apprehension upon a feeling in himself which he might not acknowledge,"—an explanation which was coldly received by Maitland.¹

All this wrangling, though its results were neither immediate nor decisive, was not a very happy prelude to Galt's fancy-dress ball. The event took place on New Year's Eve and was a great occasion in York society. It was held in Frank's Hotel, the ball-room of which was at other times the town's only theatre. The floor was decorated with an immense representation of the company's coat of arms, two lions rampant bearing flags turned opposite ways and, on the riband below, the motto, "Non mutat genus solum." Spruce branches were hung on the ceiling, the walls and in the passages; and little coloured lamps, each containing a floating light, lit up the greenery. Lady Mary Willis, wife of Mr. Justice Willis, acted as hostess, and was dressed as Mary, Queen of Scots. The judge was disguised as a gay old lady, the Countess of Desmond; Dr. W. W. Baldwin appeared as a Roman senator,

¹Can. Arch. Q. 346-1, Strachan to Maitland (Dec. 26, 1827); Maitland to Strachan (Dec. 27).

and there were plenty of backwoodsmen and Indians¹ Whatever Galt's costume was his recent anxieties must have made him rather a dour host. Nor was the dance likely to mend his relations with Maitland. His choice of a hostess was unfortunate, for Lady Mary Willis had challenged the supremacy of Lady Sarah Maitland in the social world of York. Judge Willis, whose ambition to become the head of a provincial court of equity had been foiled by Robinson, the attorney-general, was developing into a strong antagonist of the Family Compact. The dissensions which he created among his colleagues were terminated by his suspension in June, 1829. 'Whether intentionally or not, Galt once more seemed to have allied himself to the opposition party.'²

Early in 1828 Galt made an interesting addition to his staff in Major Strickland, who had come out to Canada three years before. "My first interview with Mr. Galt, the celebrated author of *Lawrie Todd*," writes Strickland, "took place at the old Steamboat Hotel in February, 1828. He received me with great kindness, and asked me many particulars of bush-life, connected with a first settlement.

"I suppose my answers were satisfactory, for he turned towards me abruptly, and asked me, 'If I would like to enter the Canada Company's service; for,' said he, 'I want a practical person to take charge of the outdoor department in the absence of Mr. Prior, whom I am about to send to the Huron Tract with a party of men to clear up and lay off the Newtown plot of Goderich. You will have charge of the Company's stores, keep the labour-rolls, and superintendent the

¹Scadding, *Toronto of Old*, p. 111 f.

²In his article on *Colonial Discontent* (*Blackwood's Mag.*, Sept., 1829) Galt writes: "A system of espionage assumes that there is something which ought to be watched and to be prevented; and as such a system probably did exist in Upper Canada during the administration of Sir Peregrine Maitland, it may be said that so far his government was led to act on false principles. Let us not here be misunderstood; we do not suppose there was anything like an organized system, but only that tales to the personal disadvantage of the anti-ministerial party were too readily listened to. No doubt, the members of that party were as credulous in listening to tales to the prejudice of the adherents of Government, but then they had it not in their power to inflict punishment." He refers to Willis as an illustration.

road-making and bridge-building, and indeed everything connected with the practical part of the settlement.'

"This was just the sort of life I wished; so I closed at once with his offer. . . . In person, Mr. Galt was, I should think, considerably above six feet in height, and rather of a heavy build; his aspect grave and dignified, and his appearance prepossessing. His disposition was kind and considerate; but at the same time he commanded respect; and I can say with sincerity, I always found him an upright and honourable gentleman."¹

In April Strickland was at Guelph busy at bridge-building and road-making, and in his spare time acting as amateur surgeon and dentist. Prior was set free to superintend the cutting of a road through nearly a hundred miles of bush to Goderich, which established for the first time overland communication between Lake Huron and Lake Ontario. Of this achievement Galt was justly proud.

"All the woodmen that could be assembled from the settlers were directed to be employed, an explorer of the line to go at their head, then two surveyors with compasses; after them a band of blazers, or men to mark the trees in the line, then went the woodmen with their hatchets to fell the trees, and the rear was brought up by waggons with provisions and other necessities. In this order they proceeded simultaneously cutting their way through the forest, till they reached their spot of destination on the lonely shores of Lake Huron, where they turned back to clear off the fallen timber from the opening behind."² The townships bordering the road were named after the company directors. Under Galt's direction it happened for the first time in the history of the province that road-making preceded settlement.

About the same time Galt went to New York to meet his family whose departure from Scotland had been delayed. While waiting for them he paid a short visit to Pennsylvania.

¹*Twenty-Seven Years in Canada West, or the Experience of an Early Settler*, vol. I., 199-200. The book was edited by his daughter, Agnes Strickland, the author.

²*Autobiog.*, II., 122.

On their arrival his wife and sons were temporarily installed in the house at Burlington Bay. A little later the boys were put to school in the Lower Province, and Mrs. Galt accompanied her husband to Guelph, where the Priory was fitted up for her reception. "Our house, it is true," he wrote to Moir, "is but a log one . . . but it is not without some pretensions to elegance. It has a rustic portico formed with the trunks of trees, in which the constituent parts of the Ionic order are really somewhat intelligibly displayed. . . . In the course of this summer, another colony has been planted, and a new town, called Goderich, laid out on the shores of Lake Huron. . . . So, you see, if you tell me of new books, I can tell you of new towns—and which are the most interesting, I leave Christopher North and the Shepherd to determine."¹

His literary propensities, Galt said, were suspended while he was in Upper Canada, because he thought he had more useful work to do. But occasionally his thoughts turned to book-making. "This will serve to let you know," he wrote to Blackwood in November, 1827, "that I am still in the land of the living. After the most active year of my whole life I have at last obtained a little leisure, and perhaps before the winter is over may send you something; but hitherto I have not had a day to spare from the road or the office. . . . What would you think of a series to be called *The Settlers, or Tales of Guelph*? The idea has come often across my mind and the materials are both novel and abundant."² Nothing seems to have come of this, and a year later he writes again about a work of a very different sort. "I have been for some time intending to request you to announce a work which I have nearly finished . . . a view of the world of London, under the title of *My Landlady and Her Lodgers*. I think it will be quite as good as anything I have ever done, and be a little like the *Annals*, with more variety of incident and character."³ Noth-

¹*Memoir*, lxx. The letter is dated Oct. 5, 1828.

²Mrs. Oliphant, op. cit., I., 462-3.

³Mrs. Oliphant, op. cit., I., 463-4. *My Landlady and her Lodgers* ran in Blackwood's from August to November, 1829.

ing could be less like the *Annals* than this dull collection of stories told by a landlady about her lodgers, a strangely musty subject for a man who was driving roads through the forest and laying the foundations of towns.

In July, 1828, the company's accountant, Thomas Smith, arrived from England. Galt, who had been hampered from the beginning by an inadequate staff, and who had asked for an accountant nearly a year before, welcomed the new arrival. As things fell out, Smith was to prove anything but a help. The directors had grown uneasy at the extent and cost of Galt's operations, particularly those at Guelph. The Canada Company, like other enterprises, had suffered from the commercial depression in England which had followed an outburst of joint stock company speculation. There was evidence also of an intention on the part of some familiar with the inside workings of the company to manipulate the market so as to buy the stock later at a low figure. Both shareholders and directors were therefore anxious to cut down expenses. Rumours were rife in Canada that the company was to be broken up. Accordingly Smith had been sent out, nominally as accountant and cashier, but also as a check on the superintendent.¹

Friction was soon felt. Smith seems to have been vain, short-tempered, and ignorant of Canadian conditions,² while

¹Can. Arch. Q. 373. A statement of the company's position a few months later shows that the contract was proving too large. About a ninth of the original shareholders had withdrawn when the Clergy Reserves were exchanged for the Huron Tract. In England the credit and prospects of the company had deteriorated. In Canada unexpected competition had been met with from the commissioners appointed to dispose of Clergy Reserves and other lands. The Provincial Government had also continued to make free grants. The company had paid to Government up to May, 1829 £42,500; expenditure in Canada, chiefly on local improvements, over £35,000. Against this total of £77,500 could be set only £29,000 derived from sales, of which only about a quarter was paid up, and a further sum of £2,500 received in labour. Government was asked to reconsider the whole case owing to the "absolute impossibility of completing the subsisting contract on the part of the company." It was suggested that the company be allowed to concentrate on the Huron Tract and surrender the scattered Crown Reserves, which were difficult to dispose of. At the beginning of 1830 it was decided to make a further effort to carry out the terms of the original contract.

²His ignorance gave Dunlop opportunities for practical joking. See Strickland, *op. cit.*, I., 223 f.





THE AUTHOR OF A "LIFE OF BYRON"

(From *Fraser's Magazine*, December 1830)

Galt chafed at the undefined extent of his subordinate's power and the surveillance to which he felt himself exposed. From the York office, of which he was placed in charge, Smith carried on an independent correspondence with the directors. The decisive explosion was caused by a trivial incident. Sir Peregrine Maitland was about to return to England, and Galt wrote to thank him for his aid to the company. In return, Maitland offered to present him to Sir John Colborne, the new Governor. When Galt came back from the ceremony Smith "broke out into a frantic passion, talked unmitigated nonsense, and said I ought to have taken him 'in my hand' when I went to Sir Peregrine."¹

His manner indicated, so Galt thought, a vague power and authority entrusted to him by the directors. To escape from this intolerable situation Galt resolved to return to England and come to an understanding with the board. By the next mail (Nov. 9, 1828), he sent word of his purpose to London. But the accountant had forestalled him, for on the day Galt's letter was posted Smith had crossed Lake Ontario, bound for New York and London to lay his version of the case before the directors. If the company's interests in Canada were not to be abandoned there was nothing for Galt but to remain at his post.

From now on his position grew steadily more irksome. The directors ordered the bank at York not to honour his drafts. Convinced by this and other circumstances that he stood condemned in the eyes of the directors, he began to gather materials for his defence. Joseph Fellows, an agent of the Pulteney Land Company, was invited to inspect the work at Guelph. His report declared the improvements judicious and necessary, the office routine orderly. He gave Galt credit for sound judgment and uncommon industry, and recommended that he be given the most ample discretionary powers.

Winter having suspended out-door work, Galt found time to pay a farewell visit to Goderich. He travelled by sleigh

¹*Autobiog.*, II., 125.

over the newly cut road, lodging at log taverns. The journey gave him full leisure to ponder his position. "I had time, as I sat solitary in the sleigh, to chew the cud of bitter thought. I felt myself unworthily treated, for everything I had touched was prosperous, and my endeavours to foster the objects of my care were all flourishing, and, without the blight of one single blossom, gave cheering promises of ample fruit."¹

At Goderich a large clearing had been made and several houses built, but the sight of promising development only reminded Galt that his own career in Canada was at an end. "My adieu to Lake Huron was a final farewell; for, from the moment I lost sight of its waters, I considered my connection with the Company closed."²

On his return to Guelph he prepared for his departure, though he had received as yet no official recall. When he left he was presented with an address signed by 144 heads of families. At York, however, only Strickland, Dunlop and one other accompanied him to the wharf. In New York he learned from Buchanan that Thomas Mercer Jones had been appointed to succeed him as superintendent. But Galt was still reluctant to admit that his dismissal was final, and in the hope that he might return he left his family in Canada.

The petty jealousies and wranglings which resulted in his departure no longer obscure the real importance of his work. The Canada Company was for him more than a mere commercial scheme.³ It was to be a means of relieving distress in Great Britain by encouraging emigration. "The best way of lessening the evils of the old world is to improve the condition of the new; and to something of this kind my thoughts have constantly gravitated."⁴ His proposals were very similar to Gibbon Wakefield's system which was applied in Aus-

¹*Autobiog.*, II., 154.

²*Ibid.*, II., 158.

³The Canada Company is still in existence. In 1856 an Act was passed giving facilities for winding it up, but in 1877 the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners reported that the company had still 400,000 acres to sell or lease. A further Imperial Act was passed in 1881.

⁴*Essay on Colonization, Lit. Life*, II., 45.

tralia. "Let the Government fix a minimum price on colonial lands, at which it will sell to individual settlers, or companies, or assign for sale to agents, as merchandise, and constitute by the proceeds a fund, from which it will construct public works in the respective colonies, and defray the expense of removing to them the superabundant labourers of the mother country."¹ But Galt saw clearly that successful and resourceful settlers could not be made out of all the surplus population of Britain.² He emphasized the necessity of making Canada an attractive field for capital, and contrasted the enterprise of the United States with the stagnation of the neighbouring provinces. In *Bogle Corbet* he shows the tendency of disappointed settlers to leave Canada for the States. It is to the credit of the Canada Company that it brought to Upper Canada a good type of settler, and helped to stimulate a reasonable and effective system of land settlement.

"I remember," wrote Strickland in 1853, "on my first visit to the mouth of the river Maitland, now the site of Goderich, a bridle-path for seventy miles through the trackless forest was the only available communication between the settlements and Lake Huron. This was only twenty-four years ago. This vast and fertile tract of land of more than one million acres, at that time did not contain a population of three hundred souls; no teeming fields of golden grain, no manufactories, no mills, no roads; the rivers were unbridged, and one vast solitude reigned around, unbroken, save by the whoop of the red-man, or the distant shot of the trapper.

"Reverse the picture, and behold what the energies and good management of the Canada Company have effected. Stage-coaches travel with safety and dispatch along the same tract where formerly I had the utmost difficulty to make my way on horseback without the chance of being swept from the saddle by the limbs of trees and tangled brushwood. A continuous settlement of the finest farms now skirts both sides of

¹Ibid, p. 43.

²See *The Metropolitan Emigrant* (*Fraser's Mag.*, Sept., 1835).

this road, from the southern boundary line of this district to Goderich.

"Another road equally good traverses the block from the western boundary. Thriving villages, saw and grist-mills, manufactories, together with an abundance of horses, cattle, sheep, grain, and every necessary of life enjoyed by a population of 26,000 souls, fully prove the success caused by the persevering industry of the emigrants who were so fortunate as to select this fruitful and healthy locality for their future homes."¹

That Galt always acted wisely in Canada is what no one will maintain. He could have shown more tact without any sacrifice of integrity; and he could have accommodated himself to the political situation without losing his independence. Strickland says that, while Galt's ideas were generally good, they were often badly carried out in detail, and that he erred in appointing inexperienced men to his staff.

But he had energy and vision, energy to form the company in the face of difficulties and delays and to accomplish much during his three years in Canada, vision to see that he was building for the future. "My successors," he wrote with just pride, "have not found they could improve my plans, but they are gathering the freightage of the vessel which I had planned and had the laborious task of the building and launching, by which my health has been vitally injured, and my mind filled with a rancour that has embittered my life."²

A note in his journal shows that he looked forward to "the general amalgamation of all the British North American colonies into one kingdom upon a federative principle;" and he saw that "a time must arrive when our colonies one by one will come of age and set up for themselves. The policy towards them should therefore be manifestly with a view to this as the best of all terms."

¹Strickland, *op. cit.*, I., 196-7.

²*Autobiog.*, II., 137.

CHAPTER V

THE LAST TEN YEARS (1829-1839)

Galt's last ten years form a monotonous record of ill-health, poverty and book-making. Like Scott, he wrote till hand and brain could do no more, and the sadness of the struggle is not lessened by the worthlessness of its literary results.

At first he faced his darkening prospects with something of the old confidence. "Here is Galt," wrote Lockhart, "as large as life and as pompous as ever, full of title-pages and unwritten books . . . and his own personal troubles which are neither few nor trivial."¹ He soon learned that his dismissal from the Canada Company was final, and before he could turn elsewhere for a livelihood his creditors were down on him. The most troublesome was the Rev. Dr. Valpy, Headmaster of Reading School, where Galt's three sons had been educated. Unable to meet the demand, a matter of eighty pounds, Galt asked for time; but Valpy, though an acquaintance of twenty-five years' standing, refused any concessions. Galt was committed to the King's Bench Prison where he suffered a long confinement.

While in prison he wrote *Lawrie Todd, or the Settlers in the Woods* (1830), the first and best of the later novels. Characteristically enough, Galt valued it as a handbook for settlers and was disappointed to find it read as a mere novel. The long rambling plot describes the career of a Scotch emigrant in America. The first part of the story was based on the life of Grant Thorburn, a thrifty Scot, who made his fortune as a seedsman in New York.² The book was welcomed by *Fraser's Magazine* (March, 1830), and Sydney Smith read it

¹Mrs. Oliphant, op. cit., I., 243.

²Galt borrowed Thorburn's MS. and gave him "an author's, not a publisher's price" for it. Thorburn declares that Galt's publishers, Colburn and Bentley, gave 3,000 guineas for *Lawrie Todd*. If this is so Galt's poverty can only be explained by extravagance or by heavy debts previously incurred. In 1834 Thorburn published his MS. under the title *Forty Years' Residence in America*.

with pleasure. Scott was disappointed, though sympathetic to a fellow-craftsman in difficulties. "I have begun *Lawrie Todd*," he notes in his Journal, "which ought, considering the author's undisputed talents, to have been better. He might have laid Cooper aboard, but he follows far behind. No wonder: Galt, poor fellow, was in the King's Bench when he wrote it."¹ Galt did well not to ape Cooper. *Lawrie Todd* is dullest when it tries to be romantic and forgets to be an unpretentious record of pioneering conditions.

Other books followed in the same year. *Southennan*, a tale of the Reformation, unfortunately invites comparison with *The Abbot*. His next venture, the *Life of Byron*, Galt regarded "as the worst paid and the most abused" of all his books. It describes Byron's travels vividly, but a curious streak of independence runs through the whole, as if Galt were taking care not to be too impressed by Byron's greatness. It was partly this and partly extravagances of style which roused the critics. But in spite, or perhaps because of the critical uproar, the book became popular. Three editions were published within a year and 10,000 copies sold.²

Fraser's Magazine said a good word for the *Life of Byron* and defended it against the *Edinburgh Review*. For Galt had been one of the men who launched the Magazine at the beginning of 1830. For seven years he was a steady contributor on all manner of subjects. This connection introduced him to Carlyle, who has left us the best portrait we have of Galt in his later years. "Galt looks old, is deafish, has the air of a sedate Greenock burgher; mouth indicating sly humour and self-satisfaction; the eyes, old and without lashes, gave me a

¹Journal, July 11, 1830. Galt criticizes Cooper (*Lit. Life*, I., 397). The *Noctes* (*Blackwood's Magazine*, April, 1830), has a kindly reference to *Lawrie Todd*.

²The *Life of Byron* formed Vol. I of the National Library, edited by the Rev. G. R. Gleig. See for criticisms *Athenaeum*, Sept. 4 and 11, 1830; *Fraser's Magazine*, Oct. and Nov., 1830; Lang's *Life of Lockhart*, II., 96; *Blackwood's Magazine*, Nov., 1830; *Moore's Journal*, Sept. 19, 1830 (cf. Galt's *Autobiog.* II., 186-9). Moore and Galt had met in London about 1822. The *Life of Byron* led to a quarrel with Hobhouse and some angry correspondence which Galt printed in *Fraser's Mag.* (Dec., 1830), under the title, *Pot versus Kettle*.

sore of *wae* interest for him. He wears spectacles, and is hard of hearing; a very large man, and eats and drinks with a certain west country gusto and research. Said little, but that little peaceable, clear, and *gutmuthig*, wish to see him also again."¹ About a month later (Feb. 18, 1832), he speaks of him as a "broad gawsie Greenock man, old-growing, lovable with pity." Carlyle was probably attracted by a man who regarded literature as an idle trade compared with the practical work of the world.

From 1831 to 1833 Galt drove ahead with book-making. On almost every volume rests the shadow of ill-health, poverty and distress of mind. At Lockhart's suggestion he compiled *The Lives of the Players* (1831).² In the same year he contributed to *The Club-Book*, a collection of tales edited by Andrew Picken, and again used his knowledge of America in *Bogle Corbet*. The excitement over the Reform Bill suggested three slight sketches. *The Member* describes election tricks and petty corruption in the manner of *The Provost*. *The Radical* is a similar skit on the other side of politics.³ In *Our Borough* (*Blackwood's Magazine*, Oct., 1832), which shows the alarm of a west country town council at rumours of the Reform Bill, Galt recaptured for a moment the humour of *The Ayrshire Legatees*.⁴ Galt's other books need little comment. In *Stanley Buxton* (1832) a wild romantic plot spoils some pleasant scenes in a quiet laird's household; *Eben Erskine* (1833) is a listless chronicle of travel masquerading as a novel; *The Stolen Child* (1833) is neither convincing nor sensational.⁵ Galt felt a pathetic and absurd confidence in his

¹*Carlyle's Journal*, Jan. 21, 1832. In his essay on Baillie the Covenanter, Carlyle refers to the "many-tinted traceries of Scotch humours, such as a Galt, a Scott, or a Smollett might have rejoiced over."

²Lockhart seems to have been a good friend in these years. Through his influence Galt became editor of *The Courier*, a post which he relinquished in July, 1830.

³Cf. *Athenaeum*, Jan. 28, 1832.

⁴*Our Borough* is continued under the title, *The Dean of Guild*, in *Stories of the Study*.

⁵One of the characters in *The Stolen Child*, a pompous and insincere headmaster, may be intended for Dr. Valpy. Many passages in this book and in *Eben Erskine* show Galt's disgust at his literary drudgery.

next work, *The Ouranologos*, which was to appear in numbers, each number containing a picture and a description of some famous event. The first and only number dealt with the Deluge. This was followed by *Stories of the Study* (1833) and by the *Autobiography* in which occasional vivid passages are lost in a diffuse, vague and ill arranged record written in a tone of defiant self-justification.

Though Galt had thus been supporting his family by incessant book-making, he had hopes of help from another source. The Canada Company had been planned with the encouragement of the Colonial Office and in the hope of compensating Canadian war-sufferers. Though the funds were not devoted to this purpose, Galt felt he had earned a broker's commission by effecting a sale of such magnitude and increasing the Government's revenues. The amount of his claim was 1,437 pounds, 10 shillings. On the eve of his departure for Canada he had asked Horton about the matter and had been put off. When he re-opened the question in 1829 he met with new delays and evasions. Repeated appeals proved fruitless.¹ At the beginning of 1834 he received a last decisive refusal which ended his expectations.

His dealings with the Canada Company did not, however, deter him from a similar project, The British American Land Company. There was the same correspondence with the Colonial Office, the same eagerness in the promoters, the same caution in the Government. Once again Galt became Secretary and later Superintendent.² In December, 1833, the Company purchased over 800,000 acres in the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada. On March 20, 1834, the Company was incorporated by Royal Charter, but before this Galt's share in the enterprise had been ended by ill health.

Since 1829 his health had been steadily worse. Confinement, disappointments and hack-work had all told upon him.

¹Can. Arch. Q. 373. In *The Member* Galt introduces a Mr. Selby who had similar claims on the Colonial Office which were disallowed.

²The correspondence is chiefly in Can. Arch. Q. 213. The Company is still in existence. A third scheme, the Nova Scotia Land Company, came to nothing.

The disease, according to Galt, had attacked him slightly twenty-five years before. A fall in the forest in Canada seems to have injured his spine. Symptoms of a nervous disorder appeared, followed by lethargy and paralysis. In April, 1831, he moved to Barn Cottage, Old Brompton, about a mile and a half from Hyde Park Corner, and in those days a place of gardens and green fields. Here Moir visited him (June, 1832) and found "the drooping figure of one old before his time, crippled in his movements, and evidently but half resigned to this premature curtailment of his mental and bodily exertions."¹ Successive attacks of paralysis affected speech, handwriting and sight. In the spring of 1833 his loneliness was increased by his two eldest sons sailing for Canada, John to try his fortunes as a settler, Thomas to enter the service of the Canada Company. In March, 1834, his youngest boy, Alexander, also received an appointment in Canada. Galt, in spite of his feebleness, had been planning to go himself, and had been counting on his son's aid on the voyage. The scheme, perhaps never practicable, was now given up.

In the late spring of 1834 he went down by sea to Scotland. It was not thus he had dreamed of coming home. His ambition had been to buy and build and plant as Scott had done at Abbotsford and Jeffrey at Craigcrook. "There are but two situations," he wrote in *Sir Andrew Wylie*, "in which the adventurer, returning home, can duly appreciate the delightful influence of such an hour of holiness and beauty and rest. The one, when he is retreating from an unsuccessful contest with fortune—when baffled and mortified by the effects of his integrity or of his friendliness, he abandons the struggle, and retires to his native shades as to the embraces of a parent, to be lulled by the sounds that were dear to his childhood, and which he fondly hopes will appease his sorrows, and soothe him asleep forever;—the other, when, like our hero, conscious of having achieved the object of his endeavours, he comes with an honest pride to enjoy that superiority over his early

¹*Memoir*, p. xcv. Mrs. Thomson also visited him a little later and has described his condition. (Bentley's Miscellany, vol. 18.)

companions, which . . . is really the only reward of an adventurous spirit."¹

For a couple of months he lodged in Hill Street, Edinburgh, and saw his *Literary Life* through the press. Moir attended both him and Blackwood, who lay dying in Ainslie Place, a stone's throw distant. Presently he moved to the family house at Greenock, occupied by his widowed and invalid sister, Mrs. MacFie. The progress of the disease was painfully deliberate. On occasion Galt could still appear in public, and he was still able to turn out a story or an article. Among his papers are several short poems which give bitter expression to his suffering and helplessness. Probably his last public appearance was in January, 1839, at the annual dinner of the James Watt club. A portrait of Galt by John Fleming, of Greenock, was unveiled at the dinner. Galt was carried to and from the dining room in an arm chair. His old teacher, Colin Lamont, was present and was very proud of his former pupil.

During a good part of 1838 and 1839 Galt was pestered with visits and letters from Miss Harriet Pigott who wished him to revise her *Records of Real Life* for the press.² Galt tried to beg off on the score of health, but Miss Pigott was determined to have his name on her title-page. Galt declared he was unable to work half an hour a day. "Anguish of sensation and confusion of head clamour to me to desist." Poverty on the one hand and selfish importunity on the other made him consent at last to do what he could. Her diary records how she crossed over from Helensburgh to press her literary concerns on the helpless invalid, or, as she expressed it, "to cast a cheering beam over his monotonous days." Galt was also engaged in collecting some of his verse for a volume, which, however, he did not live to see published. Among his papers

¹*Sir And. Wylie*, III., 124-5.

²Harriet Pigott (1766-1846), daughter of William Pigott, rector of Chetwynd. When she died at Geneva she left her diary and other papers to the Bodleian Library. Among them is material she gathered for a life of Galt. When Moir's *Memoirs of Galt* appeared (1841) she gave up her plan.

are three attempts to write a preface for the book, in handwriting so shaky as to be often quite illegible.¹

Hand and brain were at last to be released from this poor drudgery. Towards the end he was frequently visited by the Rev. Andrew Gilmour, who contradicted rumours of Galt's heterodoxy. On April 1, 1839, Miss Pigott records in her diary, "went over to see poor Mr. Galt on his death bed." Eight days later she found him in a stupor, and on April 11 at five o'clock in the morning he passed away.

He was buried on April 16 beside his father and mother in the Inverkip Street burying-ground. Three years later David Vedder, the sailor poet of Orkney, wrote a sonnet at the grave.

Near this grey slab shall many a pilgrim halt,
 With quivering lips, pale cheeks, and moistened eyes,
 And bosoms heaving with unwonted sighs,
 To gaze upon thy grave, immortal Galt!
 Thy rare Hogarthian genius could exalt
 The nameless inmates of the hamlet lone,
 To cope with men who occupied a throne.
 Thou gem of price! devoid of flaw or fault!
 Ah! the creations of thy matchless mind
 Stand forth in bold relief and bright array;—
 The simple pastor, and the simpler hind,—
 Nay, countless groups thy pencil did portray,
 So chaste, so beautiful! they all but breathe!
 Each adds a verdant leaf to thy unfading wreath!²

¹*The Demon of Destiny and Other Poems* (Greenock, 1839), with a preface by Miss Pigott. One other literary transaction belong to Galt's last months, his connection with *A Diary Illustrative of the Times of George IV* (1838). This scandalous collection of gossip, chiefly about the Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Caroline, was on its appearance attributed to Lady Charlotte Bury (1775-1861), and her authorship of it has never been disproved. Thackeray attacked the vulgarity of the book in *The Times* (Jan. 11, 1838), and burlesqued it in *Skimmings from the Dairy of George IV* (*Fraser's Mag.*, March, 1838). Alexander Galt wrote to *Fraser's Magazine* (Jan., 1841) declaring that Lady Charlotte was attempting to throw the whole odium of the work on his father. He says that Galt allowed his name to appear as editor only after "the most earnest solicitation of the noble authoress," and that he actually wrote no more than the preface.

²Printed in *The Ayrshire Wreath*, a collection of original pieces, in prose and verse, chiefly by native authors on subjects relating to Ayrshire. Vedder's poem is dated August 15, 1842.

In the gable of the house where Galt died a plate has been inserted bearing the inscription: "Here John Galt dwelt at his death, 11th April, 1839." An attempt was made by Mr. Allan Park Paton, a close friend of Galt's, and for many years librarian of the Greenock Library, to raise a Memorial by public subscription. The plan was later confined to the erection of a fountain on the Greenock Esplanade at the foot of Roseneath Street. With the assistance of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Mr. Paton secured the architect of William Morris's house at Kelmscott to design the masonry, and Thomas Woolner, R.A., as sculptor for the medallion of Galt's head. This was based on a death mask now in the possession of Mr. Paton's son, Mr. J. Fraser Paton, of Glasgow.

On April 22 Galt's widow left Greenock, and sailed for Canada to join her sons, two of whom had inherited their father's ability without his disastrous habit of scattering his energies.¹ She lived at Sherbrooke with Alexander till her death.

Galt's mass of miscellaneous writing has obscured rather than strengthened his position in literature. It would have been better for his fame if he had written four or five of his Scotch novels and nothing else. But Galt, unlike Miss Ferrier, was not in a position to practise this wise restraint and to stay within his proper domain. The support of his family was the first consideration; literary reputation was a secondary matter.

His output of print was enormous for a man whose chief energies were given to affairs. Galt spent little time searching for literary material. He drew on his own experiences in Scotland, London, the East, or Canada, or else was content to fill his pages with mere facts transferred from other books. The material in either case was seldom reshaped and

¹Sir Thomas Galt (1815-1901) became chief-justice in the Court of Common Pleas in Ontario, and was knighted in 1888. Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt (1817-1893) came out to Sherbrooke as a clerk in the British American Land Company, in which he rose to be commissioner. Entering public life in 1849, he later became Minister of Finance. The third son, John Galt, settled at Goderich and died about 1860.

transformed. Again, Galt constantly borrows from himself both in language and incident.¹ Writing easily and hastily, he never felt the desire, and, except in Scots, had not the power of giving his thoughts final expression. One of his favourite maxims was that book-making was a kind of lottery and that he could finish a work in less time than a fastidious author would take to plan it.

This is characteristic of Galt's whole attitude to literature. He describes in his *Literary Life* how at Messina he fell in with the *Life of Alfieri*. He read there that a man's greatness is measured by the benefit he does the world. The truth, he says, descended on him like an inspiration, and the conclusion he drew was that he should not make books from topics supplied by others, but furnish a topic by his own achievements. From that moment, he declares, literature was for him but a secondary pursuit, the mere means of recording what has been done. It was easy for Galt at the close of his life to select a dramatic moment for the birth of this conviction. But in reality it had been his creed from the start, and was the natural outcome of his circumstances and temperament.

Galt possesses his corner in literary history as a portrayer of Scottish manners. But he does not, like Scott, speak for a nation. He belongs to the west country, and is ill at ease in the Highlands or in London. He is the novelist of Ayrshire as truly as Burns is its poet. He describes the habits of the people whose passions are sung by Burns. The shrewd, humorous prose of the chronicler has been unduly overshadowed by the passionate zest of the singer's verse. Both have the same easy mastery of the vernacular; for both it was a natural inheritance, not an acquired literary artifice. It is fitting that the memory of Galt is still a standing toast at the Burns Club in Irvine.

¹Some instances may be given. The *Life of Byron* reproduces many pages from *Letters from the Levant*; the *Autobiography* draws on the *Life of Byron* and lends to the *Literary Life*; the *Life of Wolsey* is freely used in *Pictures Historical and Biographical* and in *The Wandering Jew*; *Eben Erskine* has whole passages almost verbatim from the *Voyages and Travels*. The plots of several of the plays were later retold in prose.

This strong local quality, with its narrow outlook and its loving minuteness, has given him his title of founder of the Kailyard School. He is indeed almost the first in the line of Scottish parochial novelists, and on that ground is the literary ancestor of George Macdonald, Ian Maclaren, Barrie and others. The racy touches with which these writers illustrate the ways of Aberdeen, Drumtochty, and Thrums come no doubt, directly or indirectly, from the *Annals* and *The Provost*. But the indebtedness goes little further. It was not from Galt that Macdonald derived his teaching and eloquence; Ian Maclaren did not learn his sentimentality from the author of *The Entail*; Barrie's pathos and humour, if more delicate, are less strong than Galt's fitful poignancy and dour satire. Galt's world is harsher and bleaker; the atmosphere of Gudetown is more like that of Barbie in *The House with the Green Shutters* than that of Drumtochty or Thrums. The softer qualities of the Kailyard School, if absent in Galt, are present in full measure in his earliest imitator, Moir. *The Life of Mansie Wauch, Tailor in Dalkeith*, ran intermittently in *Blackwood's Magazine* for three years from 1824 on, and was published in book form in 1828, with a dedication to Galt. The autobiographical form, the local pettiness, and the narrator's complacency are in Galt's manner, but the pathos is more frequent and diffuse, and the humour is often close to horseplay. William Alexander's excellent sketches of humble life in Aberdeenshire, *Johnny Gibb of Gushetneuk* (1871) and *Life Among my ain Folk*, constantly recall the *Annals* by their faithful recording spirit, their bare reality, and their strong vernacular flavour.

Galt was compared with Crabbe during his life-time, and more than once since then their likeness has been pointed out.¹ The best work of both is largely based on their own early memories and experience; Aldborough is for Crabbe what Irvine is for Galt. Crabbe's confession about his characters, "There is not one of whom I had not in my mind the original; but I was obliged, in some cases, to take them from their real situ-

¹For example, in the *Monthly Review* (Nov., 1821), and in the essay on Crabbe in Gilfillan's *Literary Portraits*.

ations,"—applies with slight modification to Galt's methods. Both are less successful when they work from literary models. *The Parish Register* is an analogue to the *Annals*, though inferior to Galt's book by reason of its artificial arrangement. *The Borough* is the counterpart of *The Provost*, though Crabbe's desire to make his picture complete lengthens his poem unduly. Both writers show their strength in the realistic treatment of humble life, and, while Galt's charm lies chiefly in his quiet humour, he is capable at times of that sternness which Byron praised in Crabbe.

APPENDIX

THE CANADIAN BOAT SONG

The Canadian Boat Song first appeared in the *Noctes Ambrosianae* in *Blackwood's Magazine* for September, 1829. All discussion of its authorship must begin by quoting the dialogue which precedes the song. The talk is of conditions in Scotland and the fortunes of Scotsmen.

TICKLER

"Why in truth, we need hardly pretend that we have not had—by hook or by crook, no matter—our own share of the fat things. India—army, navy, council, bench, and direction, are pretty well ours. In the West Indies we are the drivers almost universally, and our planters are at least half and half. Nova Scotia—the name speaks for itself—and as for Canada, why it's as Scotch as Lochaber—whatever of it is not French, I mean. Even omitting our friend John Galt, have not we *hodie* our Bishop Macdonell for the Papists—our Archdeacon Strachan for the Episcopalists—and our Tiger Dunlop for the Presbyterians? and 'tis the same, I believe, all downwards."

(The discussion continues on the condition of church and gentry in Scotland.)

TICKLER

From a kingdom, we have already sunk into a province; let the thing go on much longer, and from a province we shall fall to a colony—one of "the dominions thereunto belonging"! They are knocking our old entail law to pieces as fast as they can, and the English capitalists and our Glossins between them, will before many days pass, have the soil to themselves—unless something be done—and I for one shall do *mon possible*.

MACRABIN

Trecenti juravimus.

SHEPHERD

Weel, if the gentry lose the land, the Highland anes at ony rate, it will only be the Lord's righteous judgment on them for having dispossessed the people before them. Ah! wae's me—I hear the Duke of

Hamilton's cottars are a' gaun away, man and mither's son, frae the Isle o' Arran. Pity on us! was there a bonnier sight in the warld, than to sail by yon green shores on a braw summer's evening, and see the smoke risin' frae the puir bodies' bit shieling, ilk ane wi' its peatstack and its twa three auld donnered pines, or saughs, or elms, sugh-sughin' owre the thack in the gloamin' breeze.

NORTH

By-the-bye, I have a letter this morning from a friend of mine now in Upper Canada. He was rowed down the St. Lawrence lately, for several days on end, by a set of strapping fellows, all born in that country, and yet hardly one of whom could speak a word of any tongue but the Gaelic. They sung heaps of our old oar-songs, he says, and capitally well, in the true Hebridean fashion; and they had others of their own, Gaelic too, some of which my friend noted down, both words and music. He has sent me a translation of one of their ditties,—shall I try how it will croon?

OMNES

O, by all means—by all means.

NORTH

Very well, ye'll easily catch the air, and be sure you tip me vigour at the chorus. (Chants)

Canadian Boat Song (from the Gaelic)

Listen to me, as when ye heard our father
Sing long ago the songs of other shores;
Listen to me, and then in chorus gather
All your deep voices, as ye pull your oars;

Chorus

Fair these broad meads, these hoary woods are grand;
But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

From the lone shieling of the misty island
Mountains divide us, and the waste of seas—
Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides,
Fair these broad meads, these hoary woods are grand;
But we are exiles from our father's land.

We ne'er shall tread the fancy haunted valley,
 Where 'tween the dark hills creeps the small clear stream,
 In arms around the patriarch banner rally,
 Nor see the moon on royal tombstones gleam:
 Fair these broad meads, these hoary woods are grand;
 But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

When the bold kindred, in the time long-vanish'd,
 Conquer'd the soil and fortified the keep,—
 No seer foretold the children would be banish'd,
 That a degenerate Lord might boast his sheep:
 Fair these broad meads, these hoary woods are grand;
 But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

Come foreign rage—let Discord burst in slaughter!
 O then for clansmen true, and stern claymore—
 The hearts that would have given their blood like water,
 Beat heavily beyond the Atlantic roar:
 Fair these broad meads, these hoary woods are grand;
 But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

SHEPHERD

"Hech me! that's really a very affectin' thing, now. Weel, Doctor, what say you? Another bowl?"

The poem, especially the second stanza, has been widely quoted and very often inaccurately. It was included in *The Republic of Letters* (1831), volume 7, a literary compilation edited by Whitelaw, and appeared in *Rod and Gun* (1840) by James Wilson. In *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (June, 1849) it was printed with some alterations in the text. The famous second stanza has appeared in various degrees of misquotation in an article by Dr. Norman Macleod in *Good Words* (1860), in Cameron-Lees' *Stronbui* (1881), in Stevenson's *Silverado Squatters* (1883), in Miss Gordon Cumming's *From the Hebrides to the Himalayas* (1883), in William Black's *Stand Fast, Craig Royston* (1890). Joseph Chamberlain quoted the poem in a speech at Inverness in September, 1885. In *Blackwood's Magazine* for June, 1889, a changed and lengthened form of the poem appeared in an article by Sir John Skelton. Speaking at the festival of the Royal Scottish Corporation in 1904,

Lord Rosebery quoted the second stanza as "one of the most exquisite that has ever been written about the Scottish exile."

Neither the Gaelic original of the poem nor its author has been discovered, though much energy and a great deal of bad logic have been used in the attempt. As for the Gaelic original it may never have existed. A long list of candidates for the authorship has been brought forward, Lockhart, Wilson (Christopher North), Wilson's brother Tom, Hugh Montgomerie, the 12th Earl of Eglinton, Galt, Hogg, Scott, Dunlop, Longfellow and others. The more serious claimants may be briefly considered.

Lockhart's claim rests on the fact that he was the author of the *Noctes* in which the song appeared. The argument for Wilson depends partly on a resemblance, not very remarkable, between his acknowledged poetry and the Boat Song. The case for the Earl of Eglinton is more elaborate. In *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (June, 1849) the poem appears at the close of an article on Employment or Emigration by Donald Campbell, who introduces it thus: "The late Earl of Eglinton, a distinguished member of a family not destitute of Celtic blood, and which has been illustrious for chivalrous honour and patriotic feelings and principles, had a high opinion of the loyalty and bravery of the Canadian Highlanders, and left the following translation of one of their boat songs among his papers, set to music by his own hand." The statement that the song was among the Earl's papers has never been verified. In this version the fourth stanza is changed to the following:

When the bold kindred, in the time long vanish'd,
Gather'd on many a Scottish battle-field,
No seer foretold the children would be banish'd,
Proscrib'd the tartan plaid and studded shield.

This is apparently a reference to the Proscribing and Disarming Act of 1747. The Earl of Eglinton (b. 1739) entered the army in 1756 and saw considerable service in America with the 78th Regiment of Highlanders. The argument is that he wrote the song while in Canada. He returned to

Scotland later, and died in 1819. This theory, attractive and convincing in many ways, does not explain the poem's appearance in 1829. The change in text can be explained on the ground that whoever inserted the song in Blackwood's thought that a reference to the Proscribing and Disarming Act was out of date in 1829, and accordingly replaced it by a reference to the evictions in the Highlands.

If Lockhart, Wilson, or the Earl of Eglinton is to be accepted as the author, the statement about the friend in Upper Canada must of course be disregarded. There are no serious arguments to connect the poem with the names of Scott, Hogg and others. It remains to consider Galt and Dunlop.

The arguments for Galt are far from conclusive. The mainstay of the case is his connection with Canada and with Blackwood's. But Galt was in England in April, 1829 (*Autobiography*, II., 344). In London he met Lockhart in June. That Galt was a contributor to the number of the magazine in which the song appeared proves nothing. Mr. J. H. Lobban, who made a search in the archives of William Blackwood and Sons discovered that an article on *Colonial Discontent*, signed Cabot, which was printed in that number, was by Galt. The same number also contains an instalment of his serial *My Landlady and her Lodgers*. Mr. Lobban, however, found nothing to connect Galt's name with the Boat Song.

Several other facts tell against rather than for Galt. He never mentions the poem, though his *Literary Life* speaks of many of his writings of far less merit. There is no reason to suppose that he had any knowledge of Gaelic, though this does not matter if the Gaelic original is not taken seriously. Judging by *The Spaewife* and *The Chief* (Blackwood's, April and May, 1833), he had none of the feeling for Highland character and tradition which appears in the Boat Song. His *Autobiography* records no experience corresponding to the circumstances mentioned in the *Noctes*. His trip to Montreal and Quebec was in winter and by sleigh. The nearest parallel is his trip in 1827 on Lake Simcoe and Lake Huron. Some passages in his account of it are suggestive of the mood of the

Boat Song (*Autobiography*, II., 72 ff.). Holland's Landing, he says, "presented to me something of a Scottish aspect in the style of the cottages, but instead of mountains the environs were covered with trees. . . . After descending the river we steered across Lake Simcoe, the boatmen during the time amused us in the stillness of the evening with those French airs which Moore has rendered so popular by his Canadian boat songs." The following morning "the mist prevented me from seeing the outline of the adjacent land, but the situation of the house reminded me of Rhuardinnan at the foot of Ben-Lomond in Scotland." He was further reminded of his boyish expedition to Loch Lomond by "the houseless shores and shipless seas" of Lake Huron. If Galt wrote the Boat Song he probably did so at this time, when his mind was apparently full of Scottish memories. If it belongs to him it is by far his best poem.

Dunlop did not come into the field as a candidate till 1918. The main point in his favour is that he was in Canada when the song appeared. He had of course earlier been a contributor to Blackwood's. The chief argument against him is that, so far as is known, he was not a writer of verse.

The following are a few of the many discussions of the Boat Song. The main facts are clearly and impartially stated by Mr. G. M. Fraser in *The Times Literary Supplement* of December 23, 1904. Mr. Fraser also presents the case for Wilson in *The Lone Shieling* (1908). The arguments for the Earl of Eglinton are well put in *The Canadian Boat Song and Other Papers* (1912) by Thomas Newbigging. Two articles in *The Thistle* (May, 1910, and Dec., 1912) also plead for Eglinton. An article in *The Canadian Magazine* (March, 1918) by Mr. Charles S. Blue, upholds Dunlop.

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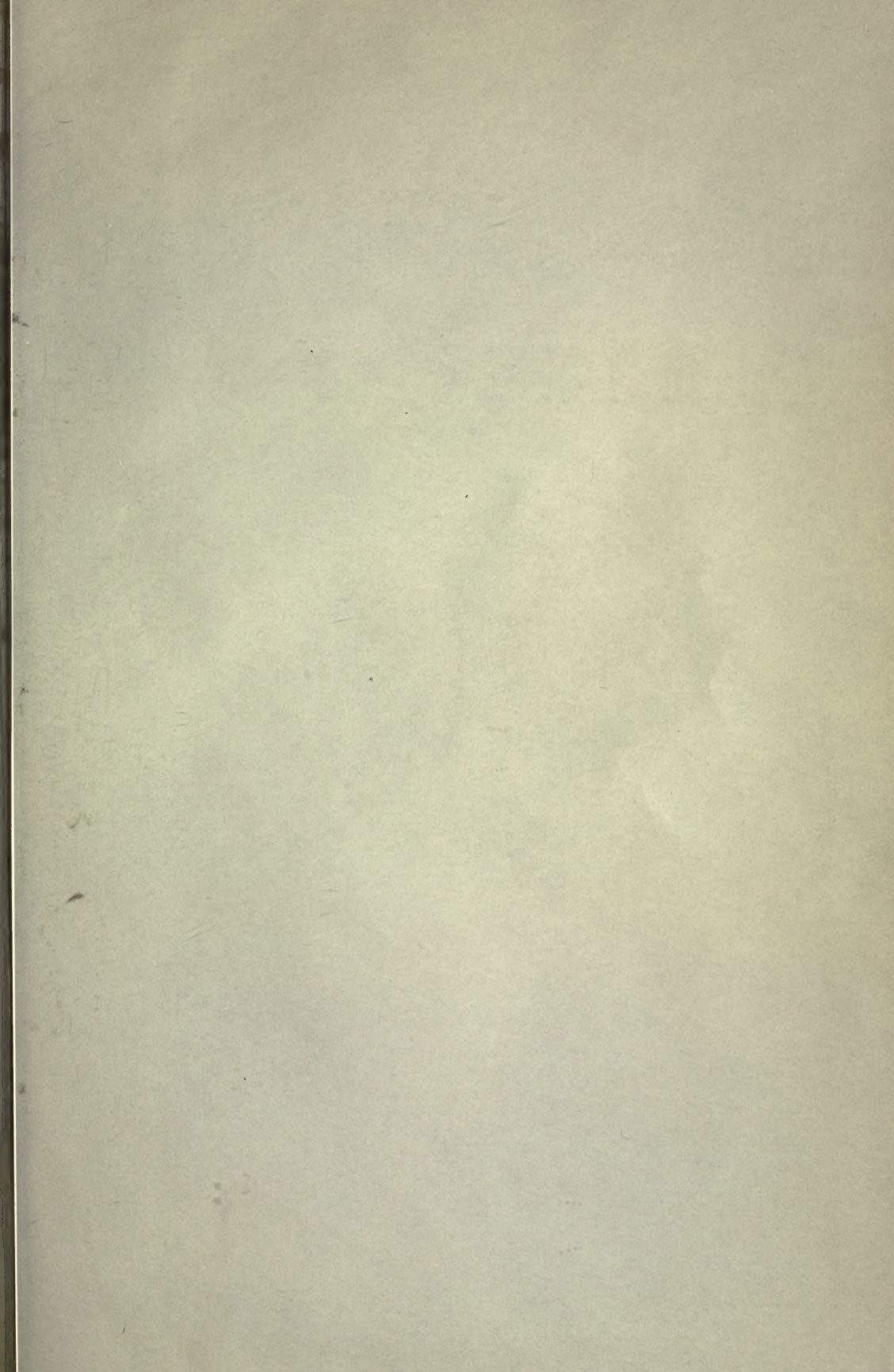






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